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Huckabee the Populist
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Kumbaya '08

If you are just tuning into the presidential campaign, you might think it's just another year of deep and bitter division for the Democrats.

There's Hillary Clinton accusing Barack Obama of lying about policy. There's Obama asking John Edwards why he didn't produce more in the Senate. There's Edwards calling Clinton a puppet for high-priced lobbyists. But listen a little more closely and you'll realize that all of this bitter rhetoric is masking something unexpected: agreement.

Consider the noisiest topic of dispute: the ongoing controversy over whether to require that every American obtain health insurance, an idea Hillary Clinton and John Edwards endorse and Barack Obama does not. While it's an important dispute—without such a requirement, millions of additional Americans might end up without coverage—it's really the only area of serious disagreement. All three Democrats say they want universal coverage. And all three Democrats would make insurance more accessible by heavily regulating the private insurance industry, providing financial assistance to people who need help paying for coverage, and then expanding public insurance programs for those people still too poor to afford any policy at all.

The consensus extends beyond health care. When it comes to averting catastrophic global warming, all three candidates have proposed the same essential scheme: They would each create a cap-and-trade system, in which the government would set an overall limit on dangerous emissions, auction off pollution permits, and then allow companies to trade the permits among themselves. When it comes to improving America's schools, all three candidates have pledged to change, but not eliminate, the No Child Left Behind Act—by providing the measure with more money and by changing the system for testing students, so that it more accurately measures progress on a year-to-year basis. Nor is it just the particular proposals that the Democrats have in common. It's the relative priority they seem to give them. While all three have pledged to reduce budget deficits, in part by letting the Bush tax cuts expire, all three have also indicated they won't insist on fully balancing the budget immediately—because such a hasty move, they recognize, might mean giving up on worthy investments or spending proposals.

If you're a Democratic loyalist, you're probably rubbing your eyes. Ideological smackdowns have been a staple of Democratic primaries for decades. There's always been a candidate touting neoliberalism or a brand of centrism to the right of that—from Gary Hart to Al Gore to Bill Clinton to Joe Lieberman—engaged in lively (and occasionally fierce) discussions with candidates well to their left. This time around, the domestic policies of the leading contenders are bunched in the same spot along the ideological spectrum.

So what has changed? Political necessity, for one thing. Spending the better part of eight years watching Republicans enact a radically conservative agenda has focused Democrats on winning—which necessarily means putting up a united front.

But, more importantly, the domestic policies of the past debates have been settled. In part, the global economy has conspired to create this consensus by creating unignorable facts on the ground. Aside from a few revanchist elements, the left recognizes that it can't pretend to stand athwart globalization screaming "stop"—even as the center recognizes that it can't pretend globalization makes everybody better off. The left has learned to live with work requirements for welfare while the center has learned to live with the remaining fragments of the union movement.

This consensus is also the product of that past ideological bloodshed. The center helped curb the worst political and policy excesses of liberalism, making the world politically safe for Democrats to rally behind universal health care, a program that was considered too ambitious and fraught in recent campaigns. And, while identity politics clearly persists within the Democratic Party, it has also, thankfully, slid into abeyance—a fact that has, somewhat ironically, helped propel Barack Obama's candidacy. Substantive disagreements still

Lou Beach

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remain, of course, but they lack the defining quality that created such huge rifts in the past.

Do we wish the consensus had different contours? Of course. We'd prefer, for instance, a more ambitious education policy that aggressively challenged teachers' unions. (Obama, to his credit, has at least opened the door to merit pay.) But the result is a mostly sensible agenda with real potential to evolve into legislation, should a Democrat win the White House in November and should, say, a few extra Democrats take new seats in the Senate.

If there's a downside, in fact, it's that all the agreement tends to elevate the trivial and the trashy—as it has in the last few weeks, when a surrogate for Clinton began suggesting that Obama's youthful flirtation with illegal drugs made him unelectable. But that is what happens when the candidates agree on as much as they do. That's not the worst thing in the world. No, youthful drug indiscretions shouldn't define this campaign. But broader questions about character, leadership style, and political viability should deeply influence it.

After all, the three front-runners may agree on what the world ought to look like, but they have presented different visions for how to get there. One candidate would manage the political process in Washington, one candidate would wage a populist crusade against it, and one candidate would try simply to transcend it. Reasonable people can disagree about which approach makes the most sense—and who, given their personal qualities, is in the best position to succeed. But that, too, is a fight worth having.

Teachable Moment

Watching the Republicans debate education in Iowa earlier this month, we couldn't help feeling a twinge of jealousy. Unlike the Democrats, they apparently recognize that it will take more than tinkering with No Child Left Behind to salvage our schools. They trumpeted charter schools and knocked teachers' unions—and only John McCain paid obeisance toward vouchers, though even that fix is too unpopular these days for arch-conservatives to make more than passing mention.

It was pleasing rhetoric, but just that. The most promising development in American education was happening 1,000 miles away, in, of all places, Washington, D.C. We're not talking about changes burbling up in the Department of Education or the U.S. Congress, but municipal Washington, a place that is rarely at the vanguard of salutary urban reforms. Under its new and highly energetic mayor Adrian Fenty, the city has stripped power from the elected school board and installed a relatively youthful chancellor named Michelle Rhee. Her appointment was something of a breakthrough. Rhee rose through the ranks with Teach for America and is a product of a reform movement that has little patience for the traditional educational establishment. She is, in fact, the first veteran of this reform movement to take control of a major city's schools.

This is supremely bad news for the corrupt bureaucracy that has greatly contributed to the sorry state of the District's system. Last week, the city council granted Rhee the authority to buck the civil service laws and fire these bureaucrats. The unions, of course, rallied against her. They argued that she was embarking on a dangerous course—after she cleans out the bureaucracy, surely she will begin firing principals and teachers next. What will protect these unionized employees from Rhee's wrath?

Of course, they are right to worry. And the city council's vote last week should make them downright panicked. Only three members of the 13-person board—one of them was Marion Barry—sided against Rhee. In short, the sclerotic establishment can no longer count on its old political patrons. And her victory was an important object lesson for other cities: Reformers can now battle the teachers' unions—and trounce them.

In the District, the education establishment doesn't have a very strong case to make. Since the 1990s, the number of district middle-schoolers able to achieve "basic" proficiency in math and science has been below 50 percent. Simple building repairs take months. Unopened rafts of textbooks remain squirreled away in a shambolic warehouse. This isn't the type of crisis that can be solved with melioration. It will take an overhaul, an entirely new culture—and it's extremely gratifying to know that the political conditions for such change may finally have arrived. ◆

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Partners in Crime

Rudy Giuliani, ethicist to the underworld.

JONATHAN CHAIT

In the spring of 2006, Rudy Giuliani had to quit the Iraq Study Group after failing to appear at several meetings. His resignation letter cited "previous time commitments," which turned out to be lucrative speaking engagements. Giuliani now says the obvious conclusion—he skipped the commission to make money—is unfair. The truth, he recently explained to NBC's Tim Russert, is that he left the commission to avoid a conflict of interest. "I was a possible and more than possible presidential candidate," Giuliani said. "As I started to get involved the first month or so, I realized that this would be a terrible conflict."

It's not obvious to me why it would be a conflict for a presidential candidate to give foreign policy advice to a sitting president he supported. But that's just how exquisitely fine-tuned Giuliani's sense of ethical propriety is: He's so ethical he gave up the easy pleasures of serving on a blue-ribbon foreign policy panel and resigned himself to the drudgery of the six-figure speech circuit.

As Giuliani and his hirelings are wont to point out, "ethics" is synonymous with the Giuliani name. His consulting firm, Giuliani Partners, is based upon the strength of Giuliani's reputation. As Giuliani Partners senior managing director Michael Hess explained a year ago, "We bend over backwards and are very careful about who we do business with, for the most obvious reasons—from the beginning, Rudy's brand of integrity and ethics always had to be preserved."

To those uninitiated in Giuliani's business methods, it might sound odd to refer to integrity and ethics as a "brand," as opposed to, say, a value system. But Giuliani's reputation for unwavering ethics is precisely the commodity that his company sells. The buyers are various firms in sundry lines of work whose only connection is a desire to associate themselves with Giuliani's brand. Naturally, the intense demand for this brand has driven up the price. Since 2002, Giuliani has amassed an enormous fortune in the field of ethics.

Strangely, for a man of his boundless integrity, Giuliani has refused to divulge his client list. Reporters have managed to unearth some of Giuliani Partners' clients, and what they have found gives a clearer sense of precisely what it is that Giuliani is selling. One Giuliani client, Hank Asher, had once smuggled planeloads of cocaine from the Bahamas. Asher has since created homeland security–related software, and Giuliani has argued that he reformed his ways. Alas, the defense suffered a setback when Asher was recently alleged to have given a $15,000 watch to the wife of a Homeland Security official who could potentially throw business his way.

Another Giuliani Partners client has been linked to a reputed Hong Kong organized crime figure with ties to North Korea. Another is the Qatari government, elements of which had been implicated in supporting terrorism and which hired Giuliani Partners in the wake of an embarrassing, high-profile terrorist strike. Then there is the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, which turned to the firm in the wake of a betting scandal, to draw up a list of security procedures. None of those procedures was fully implemented, as *The Washington Post* later reported, but Giuliani's specific ideas about horse-racing security don't seem to be what the Association was really paying for.

In 2002, Purdue Pharma faced a political and public relations crisis when its painkiller OxyContin resulted in a wave of overdose deaths and pharmacy break-ins by drug dealers. When the federal government investigated, Purdue Pharma hired Giuliani Partners. As *The New York Times* reported, "The company needed the political cover of an alliance with someone considered an unimpeachable American hero."

When Giuliani started his firm in 2002, still basking in the warm afterglow of the September 11 attacks, it was simply assumed that he would make his business dealings transparent if he ever sought public office. ("Presumably, Mr. Giuliani will be more forthcoming if he runs for office," declared a *New York Times* news story at the time.) Instead, he has steadfastly refused, and his explanations for why he won't reveal all his clients do not totally reassure.

Giuliani's first defense is that he cannot divulge his clients because they asked to sign confidentiality agreements. In fact, Giuliani Partners, not its clients, is the party that requests confidentiality.

Giuliani also says we shouldn't worry, because most of his clients have been revealed in the press, anyway. "Just about every single client of Giuliani Partners, which is my security company, has been discussed, has been examined, certainly every significant one," he told Russert. *Just about* every client? This is approximately as reassuring as a murder suspect who tells the police they can search just about every room in his house.

Giuliani has further insisted that every one of his clients is upstanding. "None of them," he told Russert, "amount to anything other than ethical, lawful, decent work done by both companies, sometimes of the highest standards, always ethical and decent." Not only is this obviously false, if you think about it, it *has to be* false. Giuliani is in the business of selling his reputation. What sort of firms need to buy that product? Not the Boy Scouts of America. It's drug smugglers, scandal-plagued firms, and others who need the imprimatur of Giuliani's 9/11 halo.

You certainly can't question the shrewdness of Giuliani's business venture. Ground Zero bestowed upon him an image of integrity and courage. Years from now, the post–September 11 deification of Giuliani is going to look more than a bit ridiculous. (Already, the fact that he skipped out on the Iraq Study Group seems less scandalous than the fact that he was invited in the first place.) Having been bequeathed a highly valuable but rapidly perishable asset, he rapidly set out to convert it into financial gain. Hence Giuliani's decision to spend his post-mayoral years lending (or, more precisely, renting) his name to a series of unsavory characters and appearing at Get Motivated! seminars with Zig Ziglar ($225 a head, or just $49 if you order in advance) to recount his 9/11 heroism.

It's slightly unbecoming, but hardly surprising, that Giuliani chose to cash in on his ethical reputation. What is surprising is that he did so and *then* turned around and ran for president on the basis of that same reputation. Putting your good name up for sale is like putting the family silver up for sale. Once you sell it, you don't get to keep it anymore. ◆

TRB
From Washington

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Back on the Bus

John McCain parties like it's 1999.

John McCain is feeling nostalgic. It is a frigid morning in early December, and his campaign bus—once again christened the Straight Talk Express—is barreling through the New Hampshire countryside en route to yet another town hall meeting. As he sits in his cabin in the back of the bus, holding court for the small press contingent traveling with him, he begins thinking back to this time eight years ago.

"You've got to remember," McCain says, raising his voice to be heard over the din of the engine, "it was by no means clear [in 2000] that we were going to win New Hampshire a month out." Of course, in that month, McCain caught fire. Likening himself to "Luke Skywalker trying to get out of the Death Star," he waged an insurgent campaign against the GOP establishment and its anointed candidate, George W. Bush—scoring a landslide upset in New Hampshire, only to have the empire strike back in South Carolina and effectively bring his presidential bid to an end.

Eight years later, McCain naturally doesn't want to talk about the 2000 campaign's depressing denouement, choosing instead to focus on its thrilling beginning—and, more to the point, how those heady days in 2000 bear an increasing resemblance to what he says he's seeing now, just a little more than a month before the January 8 primary that is shaping up to be his last stand. This, in and of itself, is something that would have once been inconceivable. A year ago, it would have been inconceivable because the then-front-running McCain was supposed to have already sewn up the nomination by this point. And, six months ago, when McCain's campaign organization imploded and much of his senior staff either quit or was fired, it seemed inconceivable that he would still be on the trail come December, let alone competitive in New Hampshire.

Yet, with the GOP race still in a remarkable state of flux, McCain, partly by dint of hanging around, now stands a chance of winning the state. He has secured the endorsement of its largest newspaper, the *Union-Leader*, and climbed to second place in statewide polls. And, while he still trails Mitt Romney by double digits in most of those polls, the front-runner is now in danger of losing Iowa—which would weaken him going into New Hampshire. Although his political resurrection is still unlikely, McCain is enjoying himself. "We've started to sense some of what was going on back in '99," he says. "The audience, the turnout at the town hall meetings. . . . You can just sense the uptick in excitement." For McCain—whose campaign at this point may be less about winning the presidency than about reclaiming some of the dignity he earned the last time he ran—that alone is a victory of sorts.

While McCain undoubtedly would have preferred for the 2008 campaign to have gone differently, the front-runner mantle was never a good fit. Although his reputation as a maverick can certainly be overdone, when it comes to campaigning, he truly is one—with the near-constant access he affords both the press and voters. "The way he does things entails risks," says longtime aide Mark Salter. "Front-runners are usually about protecting the ball. He's not."

Today, McCain's campaign is a barebones affair. It stays in budget hotels and doesn't bother with elaborate advance work at events. Most of the campaign's remaining senior staffers, including Salter, are foregoing salaries. Even the 2008 version of the Straight Talk Express is reputed to be shabbier than the

WHITE HOUSE WATCH *With* **DREW FRIEDMAN**

Bill Clinton, stumping for the missus.

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one from eight years ago. But all this has merely freed the candidate to run the sort of improvisational and highly personal campaign at which he excels.

More than any other politician, McCain seems to draw voters who are seeking some sort of emotional comfort. And, by turning his events into freewheeling sessions, he inevitably hears from them—whether it's the mother of a solider slain in Iraq who wants McCain to wear a memorial bracelet or the wife of a veteran who wants McCain's counsel about how to keep her family together now that her husband is having trouble finding work. At a climate change forum in Portsmouth, one man who had been severely disabled in a motorcycle accident some 20 years ago shocks the audience, not to mention the candidate, by essentially asking whether McCain thinks he should commit suicide. "All I can tell you," McCain responds, "is that I know that loving family members, loving neighbors and friends want to do everything we can to help you live as long and as beautiful a life as possible. And we pray for you. And we cherish you. God bless you."

But, while McCain offers plenty of psychological comfort on the stump, he still provokes political discomfort—sometimes going out of his way to do so. At a Rotary Club meeting in Portsmouth, a businesswoman asks McCain what he would do to reverse the rise in gasoline and heating oil prices before going on to make a tangential observation about how commodities traders, and not OPEC, control those prices. But McCain can't let the aside go. Rather than reassuring the woman that he'd tackle high energy prices, he replies, "First of all, with respect, I do not accept your thesis. I think OPEC still controls the [prices]." When the woman starts to protest, he cuts her off: "You can send me your facts, and I'll send you my facts."

It was this blunt style that made McCain an overnight star here in 2000. But now McCain's refusal to pander is hurting him badly on two issues: immigration and the Bush administration. At a town hall in Raymond, an agitated man complains to McCain—who has taken a softer line on immigration than his GOP rivals—about "these illegal Mexicans" supposedly getting Social Security money and free health care. When McCain tries to appeal to his compassionate side—noting that illegal immigrants "are God's children" and that "there are people who die in the desert"—the man shouts, "They take the risk!" "Well, I guess that's one way of looking at it," McCain replies in a resigned tone as the man storms out of the meeting. "And I understand why you wouldn't support me."

But, if McCain isn't conservative enough on immigration for Republicans, he's not independent enough from the Bush administration for independents. In 2000, New Hampshire independents—who make up about 45 percent of the state's electorate and are permitted to vote in either the Democratic or Republican primary—overwhelmingly went for McCain. But, this time around, polls show them favoring Barack Obama. And a big reason seems to be McCain's refusal to go after Bush the way he did in 2000. At the Portsmouth Rotary Club meeting, an independent voter named Larry Gray asks McCain about how he'd choose a vice president. The question is really just

a thinly veiled invitation to attack Dick Cheney, but McCain doesn't bite, filibustering with a joke about how the veep's two jobs are "to break a tie vote in the Senate … and to inquire daily about the health of the president." Afterward, Gray is disappointed. "I think favorably of him," he tells me. "But I'm disappointed he didn't say something negative about Cheney."

McCain and his aides insist that he can win not only New Hampshire but also the nomination. A victory here, they predict, would lead to an influx of Internet cash that would instantly solve McCain's money woes. "In 2000, we raised one million online overnight—*in 2000*," Salter says. And McCain claims that this cycle's compressed primary calendar would help him in South Carolina, which comes just 11 days after New Hampshire. "A lot of people allege that, if you'd have had this amount of time between the New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries [in 2000], I would be president of the United States today," McCain says. "Because it wasn't until the last few days that the machine in South Carolina kicked in and then-Governor Bush overtook us."

It's impossible to know whether McCain and his aides really believe these arguments. But it's easy to recognize how grateful they are for the opportunity to make them. And that, it seems, is the real meaning of what McCain's supporters now call his "New Hampshire surge": that it has given him one last chance to do something he so obviously loves. Sitting by a fire late one night at Bedford's Wayfarer Inn and gossiping with his former campaign strategist Mike Murphy; taking constant phone calls from his friend Lindsey Graham, who's urging him to go on the air with ads in South Carolina; repeating the same corny jokes he told on the stump in 2000; saluting the legions of veterans who flock to his events—McCain, like his boyhood hero Ted Williams hitting a home run in his final career at-bat during an otherwise meaningless late-season game, is getting one more chance to recapture some of his past glories. And if he were to actually win New Hampshire? It's unlikely it would propel him to the nomination; but it would undoubtedly cushion the blow of his seemingly inevitable defeat. And, if politics owes John McCain anything, it may just be that.

Jason Zengerle

Popular Uprising

Mike Huckabee is all class.

Spend enough time on the road with Mike Huckabee these days and you're likely to hear the story of the Razorbacks stadium blanket. The now-notorious blanket came into being during Huckabee's 2002 reelection campaign, when it was quilted by an enthusiastic supporter and passed to a Huckabee aide, who later presented it to the governor. Huckabee's staff reported the gift in an ethics filing the following January. But its estimated $50 value struck a local journalist as suspiciously low. The journalist called the quilter, the quilter priced her handiwork at $200, and suddenly a scandal was born. Huckabee finally returned the blanket to put an end to the affair, only to have the woman confess that it was worth $50 after all.

As it happens, the stadium blanket story is part of a ritual Huckabee performs

David Cowles (2)

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when he's asked about the ethical misdemeanors he allegedly committed as governor. Once he's done lamenting the great blanket caper, Huckabee will sometimes recall the time he was investigated for printing campaign flyers on a $10 ream of office paper—an apparently questionable mix of state and political activity. In these cases, Huckabee can resemble a budget watchdog from the 1980s—the people who'd hold press conferences denouncing the Pentagon's $600 toilet seats and $400 hammers. Except that, for Huckabee, the point isn't to demonstrate how absurdly expensive an item was, but how absurdly cheap. "The reason I'm walking you through this is because I want you to see how ridiculous some of this stuff is," he'll say.

Two things cross your mind when you witness this slightly bizarre display. The first is how anyone could mistake such a plainspoken and charming man for a serial ethics violator. ("Being a Republican in my state is tantamount to being a fire hydrant in a neighborhood of dogs," Huckabee said recently. I defy you to name a bona fide embezzler who actually talks like this.) The second thing you notice is how modest and downscale Huckabee's world was until now. Fifty-dollar blankets? Ten-dollar reams of paper? Was this guy a governor or the head of an Elks lodge?

It may not be a stretch to say Huckabee has quipped his way to the GOP's top tier. Certainly he can thank the quips for the press's infatuation with him. Most journalists had never written "witty" and "evangelical Christian" in the same sentence before, so Huckabee was something of a revelation.

In fact, Huckabee's a familiar type in the evangelical world—the pastor who garnishes his sermons with corny punch lines to make the scripture go down easier. Often you get the feeling Huckabee is cribbing from lines he's field-tested in the pews. "People asked me when I ran for office in Arkansas if all the Baptists were active in my campaign," he recalled at a recent campaign event. "I said, 'Every one of them were active. Half for me, half against me, but they all were active.'" That non-evangelical voters and journalists find these flourishes novel says more about how marginal evangelical culture is than it does about Huckabee himself. Just imagine how exotic it would be to hear Joe Lieberman joke about his Jewish mother if no one had ever heard of Woody Allen or Jerry Seinfeld, and you begin to understand the appeal.

Huckabee's evangelicalism is, in some respects, an expression of his working-class roots. Piety and poverty were strongly correlated in the South of Huckabee's youth—and Huckabee's denomination, the Baptists, was more pious than most. Still, it's sometimes striking how much class informs Huckabee's worldview. The GOP has spent a generation blurring class distinctions, uniting blue-collar Christians and tax-cutting plutocrats. Huckabee's candidacy takes aim at that achievement.

Everyone's heard Huckabee riff about class. At a recent debate, he lectured Mitt Romney on the value of working one's way through college, and he's prone to railing against corporate America. On the campaign trail this week, he pitched himself as a president "who's not the country club Republican, but the Boys and Girls club kind of Republican." He

delighted in how "some of the folks in the Wall Street–Washington axis have not been all that thrilled with me."

Just as interesting, however, are the more subtle ways that class figures into Huckabee's spiel—everything from his pop-culture allusions ("Larry the Cable Guy") to his culinary tastes (Olive Garden) to his interests in public policy. A few hours after this month's debate in Des Moines, I attended a talk he gave at a local medical school. Huckabee, who lost 100 pounds when his doctor spotted symptoms of Type II diabetes, is never more fluent than when talking about the disease. "What's really scary is that … fifty years ago there was no such thing as a pre-teen diagnosed with Type II diabetes," he said. "Today, as many as a dozen cases a week will be seen in the typical pediatric hospital—kids as young as seven and eight years old." He blamed this on an epidemic of childhood obesity.

After Huckabee finished, it occurred to me that you rarely see upper-middle-class kids with Type II diabetes. The children he's talking about are mostly poor and working class.

One measure of Huckabee's success is his tally of what you might call strange-bedfellow endorsements. This is the endorsement that ensues when the endorsee and endorser disagree on a number of prominent issues, but the endorser sets aside these differences in the interest of some greater struggle, on which he and the endorsee see eye-to-eye. A perfect example was Pat Robertson's recent endorsement of Rudy Giuliani, which he explained thusly: "To me, the overriding issue before the American people is the defense of our population from the bloodlust of Islamic terrorists."

What's interesting about Huckabee's strange-bedfellow endorsements is that they tend to come with an additional twist: Often Huckabee and his endorser don't even agree on the issue the endorser cares *most* about. At least, that seemed to be the case when, on a recent morning in Western Iowa, Huckabee strode into a Holiday Inn conference room with a man named Jim Gilchrist.

Gilchrist is the founder of the Minuteman Project, the civilian corps that patrols the Southern border in search of shifty-looking brown people. Huckabee is the governor who once tried making illegal immigrants eligible for in-state tuition at Arkansas universities. No sooner had Gilchrist, a short, glassy-eyed man with a faintly bullying presence, praised Huckabee's plan to stem our "illegal alien invasion" than did reporters start badgering him about Huckabee's record. All Gilchrist would say is, "Whatever the governor might have done ten or twenty years ago regarding this issue, that was then."

When I later spoke to Gilchrist, who worked at a car wash before joining the Marines and attending college on the G.I. Bill, he elaborated on his endorsement. "I think we really need somebody in tune with the people, not scholars," he told me. "Just a reasonable man or reasonable woman approach." They may disagree about immigration, but it turns out Jim Gilchrist is a Mike Huckabee–style populist.

To chip away at Huckabee's lead in Iowa, Romney will spend the final two weeks before the caucuses mounting a two-pronged attack. First,

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he'll argue that Huckabee is out of step with the GOP base on a number of issues—that he's, in effect, a liberal. Every day, I get a new e-mail from the Romney campaign pointing out the hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes Huckabee raised or the thousand-plus pardons and commutations he granted. The problem is that the GOP has spent the last 30 years associating conservatism primarily with culture-war issues like abortion and gay marriage. It's going to be tough for Romney to undo all this and convince people the former Baptist minister is a closet pinko.

That leaves plan B: paint Huckabee as a back-country rube who, as *National Review*'s Rich Lowry has put it, "is manifestly unprepared to be president." This effort has spawned its own line of cutting e-mails, titled "NO LAUGHING MATTER," which juxtapose Huckabee's head against a Holiday Inn Express logo. (Huckabee begged off a foreign policy question in a recent interview by joking, "I may not be the expert that some people are on foreign policy, but I did stay in a Holiday Inn Express last night.") One e-mail this week lampooned Huckabee's crude national security instincts under the headline, "SOMEONE WHO HASN'T THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY."

This tack may work, but it's not without risk. "It'll be an amazing journey when the White House is occupied by somebody who's not necessarily Ivy League, but who everybody else has written off as bush league," Huckabee said the other day in West Des Moines. There may be a lot of blue-collar Republicans who feel the same way. *NOAM SCHEIBER*

Bill of Goods

Bill Clinton screws another presidential candidate—his wife.

NOT SINCE Edith Wilson was in the White House has there been a First Lady who accumulated so much experience at governing. But that was only in the last year and a half of her husband Woodrow's term, when he had begun his slide to a massive paralytic stroke and, as it was whispered finally to be, cerebral thrombosis, without speech and without movement on his left side. Mrs. Wilson took over the day-to-day running of the presidency. Had the women's suffrage amendment passed before 1920, one might imagine a hardened Edith Wilson campaigning for the Democratic nomination—against such lightweights as newspaper editor James M. Cox, the eventual nominee, A. Mitchell Palmer (!), John W. Davis, and that blowhard, William Jennings Bryan—and claiming to be the most experienced of the lot.

We now have Hillary Rodham Clinton actually running on just such a pretense. Not because of her husband's physical incapacity—but, in a way, his psychological incapacity. Here is the inner stress of Bill's narrative in support of his wife: It tries to deny his preoccupation with Monica and with impeachment, the time he was actually AWOL, while presenting an autobiographic tale at once egocentric and photo-perfect. There is not a hesitation in either of their sagas. To alert citizens, this seeming hyper-confidence translates into yarns.

Actually, if I were Hillary, I would not be so happy having my hubby extolling my virtues. That is because he cannot keep from extolling his own. Everybody recalls the criticisms leveled at Al Gore for not using Bill Clinton more in the 2000 campaign. I vividly remember Clinton's speeches. They were full of "I" and "me." And, as if he were Al's father, "I am so proud of Al Gore." Gore did not want a referendum on Bill Clinton.

Clinton is something of a monomaniac, and his monomania goes back decades. But take one of his latest raptures, a conversation with Charlie Rose on December 14, 2007. The exchange begins with Clinton praising all the *other* candidates but Barack Obama:

> Clinton: The others … have done great things. I think that counts for something. You know, I'm old-fashioned, I think it really—I think a president ought to have done something for other people and for his country when you—when you pick a president. But …
>
> Rose: But …
>
> Clinton: But Obama is a person of enormous talent, you know, staggering political skills.
>
> Rose: Ready to be president?
>
> Clinton: Well, the voters have to make up their mind. But what I'm saying is …
>
> Rose: But you sat in the office.
>
> Clinton: In my—yeah, but—but what I'm saying is in my experience, what I know about the job and what I know about the world—and I've been to ninety countries since I've been out of office. I want a president next time who has a good vision and has great programs, but understands that even vision and programs don't necessarily change people's lives. And Hillary, ever since—ever since I knew her—has been the best I ever saw at seeing a problem and figuring out what to do about it. And that's—that's—so I have nothing bad to say about him and any of the others.

Here Clinton starts ridiculing Obama with irony. But Clinton is not good at irony: "What we want is somebody who started running for president a year after he became a senator because he is fresh, he is new, he has never made a mistake, and he has massive political skills. And we're willing to risk it."

A bit of hauteur, the eternal "I": "And I—even when I was governor and young and thought I was the best politician in the Democratic Party, I didn't run the first time I could have … '88. And I had lots of Democratic governors encouraging me to. I knew in my bones I shouldn't run. That I was a good enough politician to win, but I didn't think I was ready to be president." Take that, Barack.

Aside from Obama, what about the other candidates and their readiness for the nomination? Edwards? "He started running for president two years after he was in the Senate full time, but when he left the Senate he made a serious study of poverty." Biden? "Absolutely." Dodd? "I think he is." Richardson? "I think all of them …" All of them except Obama and, by omission, Kucinich. But, by the way, none of these aspirants whom Bill has deemed qualified has the slightest chance of wrangling the nod from Hillary.

Many commentators have observed that, in his many speeches for his wife, he speaks much more about himself than about her. In truth, this means that he is making Hillary's race for the nomination a referendum on himself. It follows, then, that, if she wins the designation of the party, the election will also be a referendum on Bill, and in a context where there is much more hostility, even rancor, toward him than among forgiving party loyalists. This is bad news for Hillary, very bad news.

The fact is that, except for the slightly populist trope from John Edwards, there are few policy differences among the real candidates, at least no policy differences that a more-than-average enthusiast for one aspirant would be able to discern from another's. Try it for yourself: Enumerate the differences between the new Hillarycare and the designs of Obama or Edwards. In international affairs, which is still the most stressful stage on which the country's future will be tested, they are *all* children of the Davos dispensation. They live in a borderless world that, in truth, no one lives in at all.

But one cannot go back to the '90s with too much nostalgia. For Islamic terror

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against America erupted all over the world from the beginnings of the Clinton administration onward: the first attack on the World Trade Center, the assault on Khobar Towers, the simultaneous bombings of our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, and, then, the successful targeting of the U.S.S. *Cole*. What was the Clinton response to these atrocities? Basically nothing.

The link between his presidency and her bona fides as candidate is porous matter. But they do share certain values. They are pleased as punch that they've made millions. Yet they can't leave well enough alone. Bill and Hillary do the tax-reform two-step. Both of them bemoan that, with the money they earn and have, their tax rates should not be as low as they are. They ought to be higher. OK. Yet their purpose in saying so, I suspect, is to tell us that, for the first time in their lives, they are really rich. Maybe they can't believe it themselves.

One of the sources of their wealth is the fortune of supermarket magnate Ron Burkle, on whose payroll Clinton has been for years. Apparently, Clinton is about to break this bond, not least because its terms may embarrass Hillary. It is hard to imagine what real services he might have provided to Burkle, save for introductions and cheery deal closings. But all of this mystery-cash glitz cannot but hurt Mrs. Clinton. Bill Clinton has had written for him a book called *Giving*. Now, it is true that his foundation does some good works. It brokers agreements, facilitates programs, persuades for-profit enterprises to cut prices, etc. Very admirable, but also not the salient lesson from the precise lives of the Clintons. The book should have been called *Getting*. The Clintons aren't experts in giving but in taking. This is something of which Barack Obama cannot be accused.

MARTIN PERETZ

Bad Huck

Mike Huckabee's unhinged correspondence.

MAX BRANTLEY, the editor of the alternative weekly *Arkansas Times*, has feuded with Mike Huckabee since the presidential candidate first appeared on the political stage during his failed 1992 Senate run. A liberal columnist married to a circuit judge appointed by Bill Clinton, Brantley penned weekly columns antagonizing Huckabee for his staunchly conservative social views, opaque campaign finance disclosures, and acceptance of gifts during his time in office. "Huckabee would believe I covered him obsessively, and he'd be right about that," Brantley says.

In a series of unpublished private letters dating to the mid-'90s that Huckabee faxed to Brantley, a surprising—and furious—side of the former governor comes through. The four letters, which Brantley provided to THE NEW REPUBLIC, are multi-page, rambling, and highly personal attacks that Huckabee wrote while in Arkansas office. In them, he excoriates the journalist, referring to the *Arkansas Times* as "a local version of the *National Enquirer*," a "collection of carping columnists," a "newsletter for the Democrats," an "irrelevant irritant" and the "Theater of the Absurd," among other sobriquets.

And Brantley was not alone. Reporters recall Huckabee as combative, even malicious, in response to critical coverage. He was known to attack reporters, fire off scathing e-mails to newsrooms, and complain to editors about probing questions. "I was just astounded at how vindictive he was," says Joan Duffy, who covered Huckabee for *The Commercial Appeal* of Memphis in the '90s. "He took it all so personally. . . . You're either with him, or you're a mortal enemy."

What's ironic about all this is how Huckabee—a graduate in speech and communications from Ouachita Baptist University and former p.r. director for televangelist James Robison—seems to be fashioning himself a sort of media-relations expert. About halfway through his campaign autobiography, *Character Makes a Difference*, Huckabee comments on his communications strategy. "Several points are helpful in dealing with the media. One is not to be afraid," he writes. "If a newspaper reporter doesn't like you, there may be nothing you can do to change that. You have to be ready to counter it with other information outlets."

And, in his meteoric ascent in the polls this past month, Huckabee has not only managed the press but mastered it. In December, *The New York Times*' Gail Collins dubbed Huckabee a "guitar-strumming, good-humored populist." Hendrik Hertzberg of *The New Yorker* wrote of his "curiously unthreatening" demeanor.

It could be that, when it comes to media relations, Huckabee is finally in good hands. But talk to enough reporters who really got to know him, and you begin to suspect that his curiously unthreatening demeanor may not last.

THE LITTLE ROCK press corps is a tiny club, and a competitive one. Just under a dozen reporters cover the state government at any given time, and the state's largest paper, the conservative-leaning *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, is feisty and aggressive. The Arkansas press doggedly covered Bill Clinton's terms in the statehouse, but Huckabee perceived himself to be unduly scrutinized. Being a conservative Republican in a resolutely Democratic state—Huckabee was only the state's third Republican governor since Reconstruction—augmented Huckabee's sense that the Little Rock press was out to get him, according to reporters who covered his administration. "The fact that he's Republican in a predominately Democratic state," says John Brummett, a columnist with the *Arkansas News Bureau*, "he tends to see his own mistreatment, and he snaps back at that."

Brummett recalls one news conference in January when Huckabee likened a *Democrat-Gazette* reporter to "Jayson Blair" and "Janet Cooke"—the respective *New York Times* and *Washington Post* fabulists—while disputing the reporter's claim that Huckabee's office hadn't responded to a request for comment. "He thinks and speaks in metaphors. And, often, they're not right," Brummett says.

Brantley has witnessed the full extent of Huckabee's piques and barbs. In 1991, he first criticized Huckabee for calling his Democratic opponent, Dale Bumpers, a "pornographer" during the 1992 Senate campaign. By October 1998, Brantley and Huckabee's feud reached a new low when the *Arkansas Times* quoted a disgruntled former aide alleging that Huckabee used the governor's mansion operating budget to supplement his income.

Huckabee became especially exercised by Brantley's attempts to gain access to his personal schedule in the summer of 1995. Brantley says that he was researching story ideas and that Huckabee had stonewalled in providing information about his whereabouts; while Huckabee was on vacation, Brantley filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for all the lieutenant governor's public documents.

Huckabee responded in a letter dated August 25, 1995, on the lieutenant governor stationery: "If you have singled out the only Republican among constitutional officers for this special 'honor,' then you've really disguised your intentions about as effectively as trying to hide Dolly Parton in a 32AA bra." "Now for the record,"

ANTHONY RUSSO

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Huckabee had written in a letter mailed two days earlier, "let me tell you where I have been this week." Huckabee explained that he was off to enroll his three kids in school and to spend a couple of days "reflecting and relaxing with friends" while celebrating his fortieth birthday. "For the first time in my adult life, I left instructions with my staff not to disturb me unless it was an emergency. I was in touch … but asked not to be disturbed."

Huckabee cut short his vacation by a day to answer Brantley's FOIA request, and he was sure to let Brantley know it. "I'm sure you're delighted to discover that you effectively ruined what had otherwise been a really nice week in my life," he wrote. "Given the tone of your writing, you're just the kind of person who would truly take pleasure in such a thing."

Further on, Huckabee concluded, "If you are so juvenile as to FOI my schedule as a result of your not getting my staff to call me away from my family on my birthday so you can get information you could use against me in a column, then do it. I frankly don't give a rat's rear as to your regard for me as a public official, because you apparently will never overcome your boorish behavior toward those whose opinions you cannot challenge on a responsible or intellectual basis." In the August 25 letter, Huckabee told Brantley: "You appear to fantasize yourself a champion of ethics in government officials, and especially imagine yourself as somewhat of a bulldog when it comes to questioning the integrity of those whose opinion differ from the Democrat party. You fail to consider that there is also something to be said for ethics in journalism, and from my own journalism training dating back to junior high (you forgot that I have actually worked in broadcast news), I was reminded that the power to report must be balanced with the responsibility to report fairly, objectively, and accurately." "Yes, I'm being harsh," Huckabee finished. "You've earned it."

Then, in November 1995, Lieutenant Governor Huckabee mailed a fundraising letter to donors supporting his second campaign for the United States Senate. "I want to tell you some inside information that I could never trust the press to get to you," Huckabee wrote, rallying his supporters by attacking the press. In the letter, he labeled the Little Rock press corps as the "machine gun members of the media," and described both Brantley and *The Commercial Appeal's* Duffy as "junkyard journalists." (Huckabee claimed that Duffy was biased against him because he had denied her husband a job in his office: "I've been on the 'hit list' ever since." In fact, Duffy had been separated from her husband for years, she told me.)

Eight months later, Huckabee wrote Brantley and said he would never grant him an interview again. In a letter dated April 22, 1996, Huckabee defended his decision. "If a man puts forth his hand of cooperation each week for 3 years, and each time has his hand stabbed, why would he put forth his hand again?" he wrote, adding: "You have abused the basic canons of journalism I learned in Mary Nell Turner's journalism class in the 9th grade at Hope High School."

For the record, according to Mary Nell Turner, Huckabee took her class during his senior year and probably never learned much from her. "He was already an announcer at the local radio station," Turner told me by phone. "I don't know he learned anything from my class."

Many reporters who have covered Huckabee believe his reticence to answer critical questions is a result of his experiences as a Southern Baptist leader. When Huckabee faced scrutiny, he exuded an infallibility that frustrated reporters. "He has a religious thing going on and usually thinks he's in the right," Brummett says. Rob Moritz, a reporter for the Arkansas News Bureau, recalls that Huckabee retreated from tough questions into moral certitude: "During the ethics questions, he would tell reporters, 'I don't see a problem here. I can lay my head on the pillow and get a good night sleep.'"

Jonathan Weil, a columnist for Bloomberg News, covered Huckabee for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in the late 1990s and broke a series of stories about both Huckabee's use of a private plane during a campaign and payments received from the nonprofit group Action America. "He was constantly getting in the press for taking small amounts of money where it just didn't look right," Weil recalls. "To a lot of people, it didn't look becoming of a governor. And his answer was that ethics isn't following rules, it's what in your heart."

This time around, Huckabee has been holding his tongue. In a December 16 cover profile in *The New York Times Magazine*, Huckabee refrained from his trademark explosiveness when asked about controversial topics like advocating for the parole of rapist Wayne Dumond or accepting more than $150,000 in gifts during his time in office. "Local journalists tried to make it look like we were gouging presents. I have no problem with honest criticism, but that was just pettiness," he told the writer, Zev Chafets.

Given the stakes in presidential politics, Huckabee may be working to strike a more conciliatory tone. Last winter, Huckabee called Brantley to his Little Rock office shortly after he declared his candidacy for an off-the-record meeting aimed at détente.

Still, when asked about the letters to Brantley, Huckabee's office was back on the offensive: "Governor Huckabee has always been accessible to members of the media," a spokeswoman e-mailed me. "Some reporters, however, have gone out of their way to distort the truth and, in some cases, become part of the story in order to further their story."

As Huckabee endures increasing scrutiny, some in the Little Rock press corps wonder when his churlishness will catch up with his folksy national image. "He's charming," Moritz says. "He's a backslapper. He's quick on his feet, tells great jokes, and sets up his speeches with funny lines." But, he adds, "He has such a thin skin, we've all been waiting for the hard hits to occur."

Gabriel Sherman

Après-Surge

The next Iraq debates.

It took a while, but we appear to have finally reached a national consensus that General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker have made progress in Iraq. They have improved security and forged deals among local political leaders in the north, west, and even much of the center of the country (including important parts of Baghdad). This, in turn, has made it possible to start to revive local economies in some of those same areas.

But the progress has been uneven. The national economy remains stagnant, with stubbornly high unemployment. Iraq's central government is still locked in the deadening grip of Shia warlords uninterested in compromising with Iraq's other ethnic and sectarian groups or, for the most part, even with one another. And the southern half of the country is deteriorating even as the northern half improves.

The good news is that this is entirely in keeping with historical norms. Typically, a properly executed counterinsurgency operation begins by creating basic security for key parts of the population. Security prompts local leaders—who are usually more in tune with their war-weary populations than the central government—to strike deals and broker truces that allow their local economies to revive. Over time, this approach forces

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the national leaders to become more conciliatory or risk losing their jobs.

The civil war in Northern Ireland is a good example. In the 1970s, the British, much like the Americans today, began emphasizing neighborhood security and de-emphasizing search-and-destroy missions. That made economic and political development plans possible in the '80s, which in turn produced national-level reconciliation talks in the '90s. It is worth remembering that Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness were every bit as savage in their chauvinism as Moqtada Al Sadr and Abu Musab Al Zarqawi in Iraq. They changed their tunes only after a years-long bottom-up approach showed their constituents that peace was possible—and threatened their leadership roles if they didn't pursue it seriously.

The bad news is that, while the pattern we have seen in Iraq is fully consistent with success, it also remains fully consistent with failure. In Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams produced encouraging results at the grassroots level between 1968 and 1972 but could not translate bottom-up progress into top-down reform of the Vietnamese central government before the United States effectively ended its support. The result was a state too weak to stand up to attack from North Vietnam.

As both of these examples illustrate, such campaigns require lots of time. In Iraq, several important factors, including the fortuitous and well-exploited "Anbar awakening," in which large numbers of Sunni tribes turned on their former allies in Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and other Salafi extremist groups, has speeded progress. But there are three hurdles the United States must clear if it is to convert initial success into victory and leave Iraq as the next Northern Ireland, instead of the next Vietnam. This will still require considerable skill—and not a little luck.

The basic idea behind the surge is that counterinsurgency efforts require a certain ratio of security personnel to civilians (usually about 1 to 50). If there aren't enough capable, reliable soldiers and policemen to handle the whole country simultaneously, as has been the case in Iraq from the start, you concentrate those available in key regions, train new indigenous formations in the areas secured, and slowly spread outward as more security personnel become available.

In Iraq, the surge brigades allowed General Petraeus to employ the prescribed amount of force in most of Baghdad and its outlying "belts" of villages. It also allowed him to take advantage of important opportunities in Anbar, Nineveh, and Diyala provinces, which have been critical in mauling AQI and the other Salafi extremist groups. Within these areas, U.S. forces have diligently worked with Iraqis to build up local security formations to supplement the national Iraqi Army (which is making real, but gradual, progress) and to substitute for the national Iraqi Police (which remains mostly a disaster).

But what will happen when the American presence returns to pre-surge levels this coming summer? Will local Iraqi security formations hold together if U.S. combat brigades are removed from their neighborhoods? As the Americans pull out of parts of Iraq, will Salafi extremist groups stage a comeback?

The answer is likely to be found in places like Anbar and Nineveh provinces. In Nineveh, local political deals, economic progress, and improvements in Iraqi Army formations have allowed the United States to reduce its presence by thousands of troops—with most of those serving as advisers and support teams for Iraqi units. In Anbar, the new partnership with the tribal sheiks has transformed Iraq's worst province into arguably its best, allowing for the possibility of a reduction in U.S. troops. If places like Anbar and Nineveh are able to sustain themselves in the coming months, then there is a good chance that Iraq can survive the post-surge drawdown. If not, then we as a nation will have to confront the hard choice of whether it is better to continue to prop up the country to prevent a slide into all-out civil war that could destabilize the region, or to conclude that Iraq is lost and redeploy our resources to try to contain the chaos.

When I was in Iraq this July, there was one question I kept asking senior American officials to which I never got a good answer: "How are you going to handle southern Iraq?" Violence in southern Iraq—virtually all Shia-on-Shia—continues to worsen. Local warlords go after each other, the big national militias like the Mahdi Army and the Badr Organization vie for territory and influence among the local power brokers, and the central government has little control. There are some positive signs—such as Shia villages asking for U.S. help in getting rid of the Mahdi Army, whose members are now fighting among themselves—but the overall trend is toward waxing violence and waning government authority.

This is a serious problem. The south is home to about 40 percent of Iraq's popu-

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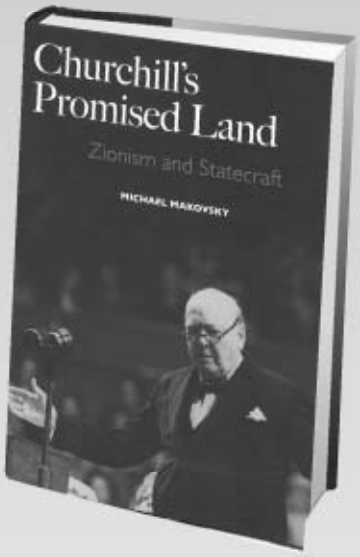

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lation. It provides Iraq's only access to the sea. Most of Iraq's key religious shrines are in the south. And two-thirds of Iraqi oil production and most of its proven reserves lie there as well.

It is clear that the relative successes in the north, west, and center have only been achieved because of the presence of U.S. combat troops and their change in strategy and tactics. If they continue to make progress, then those parts of the country might be fairly stable and secure in two to five years. However, it seems unlikely that the northern half of the country can be stabilized if the southern half slides into chaos.

American officials suggest that stabilizing southern Iraq will be a job for Iraqi forces with American personnel largely serving as advisers and fire support teams. But, at present, even the best Iraqi formations would have trouble taking back the south from the militias and criminal gangs. And, because failure could decimate the morale and confidence of the Iraqi security forces, it seems unwise to take such a risk until the Iraqis are up to the challenge. It seems equally unwise to send the more competent Iraqi formations south any time soon, lest doing so jeopardize the gains they have made in other areas. In other words, Iraqis won't be ready to start pacifying the south for several years, during which time the problems there will certainly complicate and might undermine further progress in the north, west, and center.

The alternative, of course, would be for large American and Iraqi combat formations to work together in the south as they have in the north, west, and center. But we will not be in a position to start such a campaign in the south for the same two to five years that it will take to cement the stability of those other regions (assuming that that process does not reverse itself). After all, once the surge brigades have returned home, we will not want to pull any more American units from the north, west, and center for some time to ensure that those areas remain stable.

In the meantime, the United States is going to have to work with our Iraqi allies, the United Nations, Iraq's neighbors (including Iran), and anyone else willing to help prevent the south from deteriorating too fast. There certainly are capable Iraqi leaders in the south, like the security chiefs in Basra, Lieutenant General Mohan Hafidh and Major General Jalil Khalaf. The more resources—money, manpower, authority, and military support—we can give such leaders, the more likely it is that we can prevent the south from dragging down the rest of the country.

Despite the progress of the surge in the north, west, and center of Iraq, the country's central government remains a highly counterproductive force, one that seeks to advance chauvinistic Shia interests—and specifically the interests of the bigger Shia warlords—at the expense of the country as a whole, to say nothing of its many minorities.

To address this crippling problem, the United States and its allies (among the Iraqis, neighboring states, and the wider international community) should try at least three different approaches: lean on this government to make the compromises it won't, replace it with one that will, or make it largely irrelevant (for some period of years) by decentralizing power to Iraq's provinces and municipalities and the Kurdish regional government.

The United States still has considerable leverage with the Iraqi leadership, which does not want us to leave the country. Both the threat of departure and a willingness to remain can thus be useful if employed properly. We should not tell the Iraqis that they had better shape up because we are leaving on such-and-such a date—this will only convince them that the civil war starts in earnest the day after, and they will start gearing up for it now. Instead, we should assert that the United States will only "stay" (in the sense of drawing down our forces more gradually) if the Iraqis are willing to make the compromises that could create a foundation for sustainable stability. As Anthony Blinken, a former Clinton National Security Council official, has described it, we should employ a policy of "staying on success," not staying regardless of how badly the Iraqis fail, as the Bush administration has.

If such pressure fails, then the United States should work with the international community to replace the central government—not by substituting one coalition for another within the current Council of Representatives (COR), but by advancing the date for elections (from late 2009 to late 2008 or early 2009) to get an entirely new COR. The fundamental problem is that the current COR is dominated by Shia warlords who do not represent the Iraqi people. They were elected in December 2005 only because the "closed-list" voting system encouraged cronyism and thuggish behavior, and the utter lack of security at the time left too many Iraqi Shia with no one to turn to for protection or basic services except the militias. Sunnis then protested the results of the election, declaring them fraudulent. Especially if the surge continues to improve the lives of Iraqis, new elections under a different electoral system employing open lists or geographic representation could produce a better COR—one not dominated by Shia warlords and one more willing to compromise and to govern justly.

The last, and possibly most important, track the United States can follow is to push for far greater decentralization of resources and authority. The Maliki government—especially its powerful and pernicious Office of the Commander in Chief—has been a force against progress, denying towns and neighborhoods the right to create their own security forces, withholding funds, demanding the removal of competent personnel, and foisting Shia chauvinists on them instead. Thus, the less influence the central government has, the greater the likelihood that Iraqis and Americans can secure the population, forge local political deals, and build up local economies. In the short and medium term it may be necessary for Iraq to move to something closer to a cantonal system along Swiss lines, in which each province would be semi-autonomous, reducing the need for cooperation in Baghdad among the different ethnic and religious groups.

Each of these moves is complementary and even reinforcing. Washington's willingness to push for new elections could make the current government more amenable to compromises. A push for decentralization could do the same; or it might force the government to call new elections to try to preserve its power; or it could cultivate new local power bases that would allow independent candidates to stand up to the warlords. And the leverage created by properly manipulating threats to stay or leave (along with Shia fears that the Anbar awakening has created a new Sunni counterweight) might be enough to convince the COR to pass laws easing decentralization.

The bottom line in Iraq remains complicated. We should be heartened by recent progress, but we should not assume we have won yet, either: Failure is still at least as likely as success. But all is far from lost in Iraq, and the outlines of a successful strategy are finally appearing. Nevertheless, if the Bush administration is going to engineer lasting achievements from the accomplishments of the surge so far, it still has a lot to do and little margin for error.

Kenneth M. Pollack

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Pimp My Ride

On the road with Ron Paul's merry band of misfits and his hooker fan club.

TUCKER CARLSON

The first thing I learned from driving around Nevada with Ron Paul for a couple of days: People really hate the Federal Reserve. This became clear midway through a speech Paul was giving to a group of Republicans at a community center in Pahrump, a dusty town about 60 miles west of Las Vegas. Pahrump is known for its legal brothels (Heidi Fleiss lives there), but most of the people in the audience looked more like ranchers than swingers. They stood five deep at the back of the room and listened politely as the candidate spoke.

Until Paul got to the part about the Fed. "We need a much better monetary system," he said, a system based on "sound money, money that's backed by something." Paul, who is small and delicate and has a high voice, spoke in a near monotone, making no effort to excite the audience. They cheered anyway. Then he said this: "The Constitution gives no authority for a central bank."

The crowd went wild, or as wild as a group of sober Republicans can on a Monday night. They hooted and yelled and stomped their feet. Paul stopped speaking for a moment, his words drowned out. Then he continued on about monetary policy.

Wow, I thought. The constitutionality of a central bank is not an issue you see on many lists of voter concerns. (How many pollsters would think to ask about it? How many voters would understand the question?) Yet a room full of non-economists had just responded feverishly when Paul brought it up. Hoping for some context, I went outside and found a Paul staffer. He didn't sound surprised when I told him about the speech. "It's our biggest applause line," he said.

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Our biggest applause line? There are two ways to interpret a fact like that: Either the Ron Paul movement is more sophisticated than most journalists understand, or a lot of Paul supporters are eccentric bordering on bonkers.

One thing you can say for certain: The crowds at Ron Paul rallies aren't coming to be entertained. Stylistically, a Paul speech is about as colorful as a tax return. He is the only politician I've ever seen who doesn't draw energy from the audience; his tone is as flat at the conclusion as it was at the beginning. There are no jokes. There's no warm-up, no shout-out to local luminaries in the room, no inspiring vignettes about ordinary Americans doing their best in the face of this or that bad thing. In fact, there are virtually none of the usual political clichés in a Paul speech. Children may be our future, but Ron Paul isn't admitting it in public.

Paul is no demagogue, and probably couldn't be if he tried. He's too libertarian. He can't stand to tell other people what to do, even people who've shown up looking for instructions. On board the campaign's tiny chartered jet one night (the plane was so small my legs were intertwined with the candidate's for the entire flight), Paul and his staff engaged in an unintentionally hilarious exchange about the cabin lights. The staff wanted to know whether Paul preferred the lights on or off. Not wanting to be bossy, Paul wouldn't say. Ultimately, the staff had to guess. It was a long three minutes.

Being at the center of attention clearly bothers Paul. "I like to be unnoticed," he says, a claim not typically made by presidential candidates. "That's my personality. I see all the excitement and sometimes I say to myself, 'Why do they do that?' I don't see myself as a big deal."

Ordinarily you'd have to dismiss a line like that out of hand—if he's so humble, why is he running for president?—but, in Paul's case, it might be true. In fact, it might be the key to his relative success. His fans don't read his awkwardness as a social phobia, but as a sign of authenticity. Paul never outshines his message, which is unchanging: Let adults make their own choices; liberty works. For a unified theory of everything, it's pretty simple. And Paul sincerely believes it.

Most Republicans, of course, profess to believe it too. But only Paul has introduced a bill to legalize unpasteurized milk. Give yourself five minutes and see if you can think of a more countercultural idea than that. Most people assume that the whole reason we have a government is to make sure the milk gets pasteurized. It takes some stones to argue otherwise, especially if nobody's paying you to do it. (The raw-milk lobby basically consists of about eight goat-cheese enthusiasts in Manhattan, and possibly the Amish.)

Paul is pro-choice on pasteurization entirely for reasons of principle. "I support the right of people to drink whatever they want," he says. He mocks the idea that "only government can make sure we're safe, so we need the government to protect us. I don't think we'd all die of unsafe food if we didn't have the FDA. Someone else would do it."

If you know Ron Paul primarily from watching the Republican debates, you probably assume he spends most of his time ranting about September 11 and the Iraq invasion. In fact, his real passion is Austrian economics. More even than the war, Paul despises paper currency, which he considers a hoax, "fiat money." He can become emotional talking about it. Caught in traffic in downtown Vegas on the way to an event, Paul looked out the window at the casinos and mused aloud: "Can you imagine when all those slot machines used real silver dollars? All that silver . . ." His words trailed off, as in a pleasant daydream.

Paul trusts coins, and he has bought them all his life, first as a childhood collector, then as an investor. During the 1980s, as he ran unsuccessfully for the Senate and the White House, he became involved in a coin business, Ron Paul Coins. Numismatics, he says, is a labor of love. "You only make five or ten dollars a coin. You've got to sell a lot of coins to get rich. I was just promoting something I believe in."

It's a rare person who admits something like this. Everybody knows the gold standard is for cranks. It's complicated, unwieldy, and basically incompatible with the modern world. Worse, it's boring. Paul doesn't care. "It's been over one hundred years since that issue has been talked about in a presidential election," he told me with apparent pride.

Over dinner at the coffee shop in the Saddle West Hotel, Casino, and RV Resort, Paul and his staff talked about little else. There were eight or nine of us at the table, with the 72-year-old obstetrician-congressman at the head in a gray suit, working over a chicken platter and discussing hard money. It had the feel of a familiar conversation, a dialogue that doesn't really end but that never diminishes in intensity. At one point, Paul's assistant checked his BlackBerry for the latest gold and silver prices and read them aloud to the table.

For Paul, the original sin in monetary policy took place in 1933, when FDR uncoupled the currency from gold. This removed limits from federal spending, allowing Congress an endless supply of money it could print at will, while leaving citizens vulnerable to the inflation that inevitably resulted. But, worst of all from Paul's point of view, it was compulsory. Private currencies are forbidden, so Americans had no choice but to participate. The whole system is a mandatory Ponzi scheme, built on faith in the government. Except that, now that the bottom has dropped out of the dollar, it's clear there's no reason to have faith in the government or its money.

That's Paul's essential argument. His solution: allow competing currencies. If individuals want to circulate gold or silver coins (or scrip backed by metal reserves), let them. Give citizens the chance to decide which money they trust.

The owners of NORFED, an Indiana coin company, gave it a shot. The company minted and sold thousands of silver Ron Paul dollars, complete with the candidate's face in profile, before federal agents showed up in November and confiscated their entire remaining inventory. In its affidavit for a search warrant, the FBI accused NORFED of trying to "undermine the United States government's financial systems by the issuance of a non-governmental competing currency for the purpose of repealing the Federal Reserve and Internal Revenue Code." That may be a crime, but it's also pretty close to Ron Paul's stump speech.

It's hard to think of a presidential candidate who's ever drawn a coalition as broad as Ron Paul's. At any Paul event, you're likely to run into self-described anarcho-capitalists, 9/11-deniers, antiwar lefties, objectivists, paleocons, hemp activists, and geeky high school kids, along with tax resistors, conspiracy nuts, and acolytes of Murray Rothbard. And those are just

ANTHONY RUSSO

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the ones it's possible to categorize. It's hard to say what they all have in common, except that every one is an ideological minority—or, as one of them put it to me, "open-minded people." To these supporters, Paul is a folk hero, the one person in national politics who doesn't judge them, who understands what's it like to be considered a freak by straight society.

Which is odd, because, in person, Paul doesn't seem like a freak. He seems like someone's grandfather. I first met up with Paul after a rally at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He apparently hadn't known I was coming but accepted my arrival with Zen-like calm, welcoming me into the seat next to him in the minivan and offering me baked goods from a plate on his lap. We were both finishing our brownies when he mentioned they'd been baked by a supporter. I stopped chewing. Where I work, this is a major taboo (Rule One: Never eat food sent by viewers), and my concern must have shown. Paul grinned. "Maybe they're spiked with marijuana," he said.

If so, it would have been his first experience with illegal drugs. Though Paul argues passionately for liberalizing marijuana laws and is beloved by potheads (Timothy Leary once held a fundraiser for him), he has never smoked pot himself. He sounded shocked when I asked him. "I have never seen anyone smoke marijuana," he said. "I don't think I'd be open to using it."

For some people, libertarianism is the philosophical justification for a zany personal life. Paul, by contrast, describes his hobbies as gardening (roses and organic tomatoes) and "riding my bicycle." He has never had a cigarette. He doesn't swear. He limits his drinking to an occasional glass of wine and goes to church regularly. He has been married to the same woman for 50 years. Three of their five children are physicians.

Ron Paul is deeply square, and every bit as deeply committed to your right not to be. "I don't gamble, but I'm the gambler's best friend," he says, boasting of his support for online casinos. He is a Second Amendment absolutist who doesn't own a gun. "I've only fired one a couple of times in my life. I've never gotten around to killing anything." It's an impressively, charmingly principled world view, though sometimes you've got to wonder how much Paul has in common with many of the people who support him.

Before we left the speech in Pahrump and headed across the state, I'd called a friend of mine in Carson City named Dennis Hof. Dennis owns the Moonlite BunnyRanch, probably the most famous legal brothel in the country and the setting for an HBO series called "Cathouse." Dennis isn't very political, but he's smart, and I suspected he might lean libertarian. I told him Ron Paul was speaking the next morning in Reno. He said he'd drive down to see it.

I wasn't planning on showing up at Paul's press conference with a bordello owner and two hookers, but unexpected things happen on the road. I'd arrived with the campaign at the Best Western Airport Plaza Hotel in Reno at two in the morning the night before, and, at some point while I was sleeping, the power in the hotel went out, disabling my alarm. By the time I woke up, Paul and his staff had left. So I called Dennis for a ride. He was there in ten minutes, in an enormous stretch limo with a BunnyRanch logo on the side. He'd brought two of his girls, Brooke and Air Force Amy, as well as his driver, a middle-aged man in a cowboy hat and Western wear. It was a conspicuous group.

Probably because they didn't fully understand who I was coming with, the Paul people waved the limo through a roadblock outside the auditorium and brought us in through the loading dock. A Paul aide informed us that press conferences are for press only. That's us, said the girls, and we walked right in.

The other, actual journalists looked confused. Dennis is built like a linebacker and was dressed entirely in black. Brooke and Air Force Amy looked like hookers because they are. All three slapped on Ron Paul stickers ("we could use these as pasties," Air Force Amy said, giggling) and sat near the front. Pretty soon, Paul showed up and did his 15 minutes on liberty and Austrian economics. If he noticed there were prostitutes present, he didn't show it.

The first time I heard Paul talk about monetary policy, I'd felt like a hostage, the only person in the room who didn't buy into the program. Then, slowly, like so many hostages, I started to open my mind and listen. By the time we got to Reno, unfamiliar thoughts were beginning to occur: Why shouldn't we worry about the soundness of the currency? What exactly is the dollar backed by anyway? And, if the gold standard is crazy, is it really any crazier than hedge funds? I'd become Patty Hearst, ready to take up arms for the cause, or at least call my accountant and tell him to buy Krugerrands. I looked over at Dennis and the girls. They looked like they might be having the same thoughts.

Once the press conference ended, Paul left to do interviews with local TV reporters. Dennis and the girls stood at the podium and had their pictures taken under the Ron Paul sign. Air Force Amy hammed it up. What I really want more than anything, she told me, is to get my picture taken with Dr. Paul. She meant it.

I considered trying to explain to her that I was not actually affiliated with Ron Paul, merely writing about him for a political magazine back in Washington. But I didn't. Instead, I led all three of them into the back room where Paul was doing his interviews.

Paul was talking on camera and never saw us. But his staff was on high alert. They looked more uncomfortable than I have ever seen a campaign staff look. Air Force Amy didn't appear to notice. Dressed in red, her Dolly Parton hairdo and 36DDs at full attention, she sidled up to Lew Moore, Paul's campaign manager, and made her pitch. "Hi," she said. "I'm Air Force Amy, and I'd like a picture with Ron Paul."

I knew right away it wasn't going to happen. "I've got a concern, I've got to be honest," Moore said, tense but trying to be nice. "If that picture surfaces, it could be very damaging to him politically." Dennis stepped in to take up Air Force Amy's cause, but Moore wasn't budging. "The mainstream in the early primary states is not moving in that direction," he said.

I really thought Air Force Amy was going to cry. She looked crushed. Like a child of alcoholic parents, she immediately started to rationalize away the pain. "It wasn't Ron's decision," she told Moore. "It was yours. So I can't take it personally."

But it was obvious that she did. It was awful. There wasn't much left to say, so Dennis and the girls and I left and went downtown to a casino for pancakes. There were no hard feelings. They wore their Ron Paul stickers all through breakfast. If I'd had one, I would have worn it too. ◆

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ANTHONY RUSSO

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The Revealer

Elizabeth Edwards's tell-all campaign.

HANNA ROSIN

BROOKS KRAFT/CORBIS

Elizabeth Edwards likes to tell other women that they're pretty. In her book, *Saving Graces*, she describes a classmate as a "pretty waif" and a hairdresser as having a "small, pretty face." A young girl who died in a car crash was somebody's "pretty daughter." A loyal fund-raiser's unnamed wife is "distractingly beautiful." Recently, she was chatting with supporters at a house party in New Hampshire, held in a living room crammed with antique dolls and interested locals. The last group waiting in the receiving line included two young men and a thin, 20-something blonde with a pixie haircut and bright blue eyes. "Aren't you pretty!" Edwards remarked. The young woman didn't know what to say. "She is!" Edwards repeated. "Isn't she pretty?" she asked the two men. The woman seemed flustered. She forgot whatever she wanted to tell Edwards and just muttered, "Thank you," instead.

A similar thing happened at a recent forum for presidential spouses moderated by Maria Shriver, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's glamorous wife. Ann Romney, Michelle Obama, Cindy McCain, Jeri Thompson, and Elizabeth Edwards sat around the table discussing their experiences on the campaign. When it was her turn to speak, Elizabeth said, "My gosh, you are all so beautiful. Which one doesn't belong? I feel a little bit like that—one of these things just doesn't belong." The remark was typical of Elizabeth Edwards—spontaneous, unfiltered, generous, and a little domineering: It takes a unique combination of vulnerability and supreme confidence to say something like that on a stage. The main effect of her compliment was to set her apart. They were a group of fresh faces one could marvel at, and she was the old hand, a woman to be dealt with on her own terms.

To anyone in the audience, Elizabeth would not have stood out as unbeautiful. A few months ago, she announced that her breast cancer, first diagnosed in 2004, had returned and was now considered incurable. Yet she does not look ill or any less put together than she ever did—at the spouses' forum, she wore her hair in a flattering bob and a trimming black suit. The only hint of her illness was a little pink ribbon pinned to her lapel. Wherever she goes, people ask how she's feeling, and she always says, "Great! How are you feeling?" She still can't resist an outlet mall and still makes fun of how badly some of the

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young people on the campaign dress.

No one who knows Elizabeth would describe her as someone who spends a lot of time in front of the mirror. Instead, the computer is her time suck. "I had to turn it off so I could get my Christmas tree decorated," she tells me. Elizabeth is up most of the night reading blogs, e-mails, and policy books. She has "the best mind I've ever known," says her brother, Jay Anania, a filmmaker in New York—restless, insatiable, and able to retain and then discourse in great detail on a vast range of subjects, from regressive tax policy to stem cells to the social history of the Internet to North Korea to William Blake to the Patriots to the best place to buy snow boots on sale. Once, Anania asked her the same question everyone asks: Don't you ever sleep? "Sleep is overrated," she said.

Elizabeth has such an affinity for bloggers because, temperamentally, she is just like one. For a political wife, she is unusually free with personal confessions. Since her husband ran for Senate in North Carolina in 1998, few of the family's most painful memories have remained sacred and private. We know that their son, Wade, died at 16 when a freak wind blew him off the road. We know that she had two more children, Emma Claire and Jack, at 48 and 50, respectively, after many IVF treatments. We know that she found a lump in her right breast in the shower, around the end of the last presidential campaign. We also know that she recently discovered her cancer had returned and spread to her bones when she and John were lying in bed; he put his head on her shoulder and "reached his arm over me to pull me close," she writes in her book, and then she winced and heard a pop—a fractured rib.

This stream of revelations has had an entirely different effect on both of their reputations. For Elizabeth, it's bolstered the voters' impressions that she is genuine, trustworthy, like a best girlfriend or even an Oprah figure, whose confessions of personal weakness only increase their admiration and awe. For John, it only seems to confirm suspicions that he is the slick trial lawyer adept at packaging pain and using it to his advantage. No matter how many times he puts on jeans and a work shirt, John Edwards can't shake his image as the "spoiled candidate who looks too good," as one middle-aged man confessed to Elizabeth at the house party in New Hampshire. The man later apologized to Elizabeth and explained that he'd only brought up the subject because he felt comfortable asking her anything. But this only raised the more important question: Is Elizabeth the perfect surrogate, or the person who makes it impossible to forget that her husband is the pretty one?

Elizabeth says she overshares with everyone because "I can't imagine being another way." Her friends all describe her the same way voters at a house party do: "She's a very direct, no-bull kind of person," says Ellen Maynard, an old friend from Raleigh. "She doesn't turn it on and turn it off, or put on airs." Glenn Bergenfield, a friend from college who introduced her to John, recalls going to dinner with Elizabeth's parents once and thinking, "In this family, there isn't much room for me to say, 'I don't feel like talking about that.'"

Elizabeth had the kind of childhood that could have made a different person lonely. Her father was a reconnaissance pilot, so she and her siblings moved around constantly from the United States to naval bases in Japan. But she took after him: He was gregarious and outgoing, always filling their house with people. In her book, she describes him as someone always "reaching for connections" and living his life "on a stage," and she was the same way. "It never occurred to me that there could be people who were shy or reclusive," she writes.

When she was at Mary Washington College, Bergenfield introduced her to John, although they were an unlikely match. Elizabeth was a peace activist and a "meddler," according to Bergenfield. John was quiet and serious, and wore a bowtie to their first date. She was a literature major who had traveled the world. He was studying business so he could take over the mill where his father worked. He had never left the South.

They both became lawyers and eventually moved to Raleigh and had two kids, Wade and Cate. In their neighborhood, Elizabeth was known for her insanely elaborate kid projects. Once, Wade and some friends wanted to be a golf course for Halloween, so she grew nine separate turfs of grass and somehow attached them onto clothing; one never got watered so it turned into the sand pit.

She made friends with everyone, including the people standing in line at the Home Depot. "Her house was Grand Central Station," recalls Maynard, filled day and night with groups of Wade's friends. "I'm used to bunches of kids I know and some I don't know seeing me in my nightgown," says Elizabeth. Other parents relied on her to be unflappable and incapable of embarrassment. She would tell the kids to get a haircut, or stop lying, or explain to them the power of a kiss (as opposed to anything more). When there was a masturbation incident at school, Elizabeth was charged with explaining to the boys that it was all very natural and nothing to be ashamed of.

Then, one day, she and Cate came home and there was a state trooper at the house. "You have to tell me he's alive," she said immediately. The family was about to spend spring break at the beach and Wade had gone on ahead with some friends. He wasn't drunk or speeding. A gust of wind hit the car and he flipped off the road. Elizabeth discovered then that she was the kind of person who grieves like she lives: in public. They made it through because "people came, that's what's important," she writes. Neighbors and friends stayed all day and "they were back in the morning," she writes. The house was always "noisy with visitors." Bergenfield recalls the day before the funeral when 1,800 people came out, "not so much offering comfort but expecting it," from Elizabeth, who looked each one in the eye.

Wade had introduced her to the Internet; they had bid on sports cards together on an AOL group. Now, in the evenings, she went back to it for support. On GriefNet, in a subgroup of bereaved parents, she found her community. She found out she could more easily confess certain things to strangers than to her close friends. When people suggested she go to grief recovery, she wrote to her new online friend, Gordon Livingston, "How can I tell them there is no cure for me?" In the book, she quotes extensively from heartbreaking e-mails she sent to other grieving parents: "I used to think that the greatest gift you could give a child was the sense that anything was possible. Now that gift has a horrid twist: anything is possible." Or: "I don't know how many days without him I have left inside me."

Then she quotes another e-mail, sent to her by another grieving parent: "I must let the dead boy go." The words resonated. Barely one paragraph later, without transition or explanation, she writes, "It was politics now." She and her husband had suddenly "turned our faces northward, to Washington," and John was running for Senate. This is the first she's mentioned Washington, or politics.

"It was sort of that way in real life," she says of the absence of transition. "It's not necessarily because Wade had died," she says. "But it's easier to radically change directions when your life comes to a total halt. People ask about the connection [between Wade's death and John running for office]. I don't think there's ever really any way to know that exactly."

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On a warm, clear day in November, supporter Dorothy O'Callaghan stood at the entrance to the Carroll County courthouse in Ossipee, in central New Hampshire. She said she had come to see Elizabeth Edwards "because I just feel so comfortable with her, like she's my next-door neighbor or a friend I like to have coffee with." Last time she saw her, she noticed Elizabeth had gotten a haircut and shouted out, "Nice hair!" "Hillary is equally as intelligent and capable but I don't see myself saying to Hillary, 'Nice hair,'" O'Callaghan told me.

Once, during the countless hours she spends watching C-SPAN, Elizabeth saw a clip of a candidate's wife speaking to supporters. In Elizabeth's summary, the wife's speech was some version of: We've been married a long time, my husband was a great senator, I love him, and we have lots of grandchildren. "It was painful to watch," she said. "I don't ever, ever, ever, want to be that person. If people ask me to come out and speak, then I should be able to speak."

Inside the courthouse, she stood in her pink quilted jacket and slacks addressing a crowd of about 100, heavy on middle-aged women. She told the audience they should vote for John because of his health care plan and went into great detail about how it spreads risks and covers preexisting conditions. The speech ended with a story about a woman she had met in Cleveland. The woman was clearly dressed for work, in heels and stockings. After an event, the woman came up and whispered in Elizabeth's ear that she had found a lump in her breast but was afraid to see a doctor because she had no health insurance. The woman then slipped away. But Elizabeth still saw it as a hopeful story. "She obviously felt that if she could just make her way over and whisper in the right person's ear then maybe something would change."

During the three events she did that day, supporters asked her about farm subsidies, pharmaceutical companies, Iran, flag-burning amendments. She was never stumped and rarely gave an answer shorter than 15 minutes. A question about heating bills lead to a lecture that strayed from localized electrical grids to geothermal readiness to Iraq. Sometimes she got a little too Beltway—quoting Joshua Kurlantzick's *Charm Offensive* or Jim Wallis's *God's Politics* or sniping at Republican media consultant Alex Castellanos by name. At the very least, she didn't pander. One man complained that people just wanted to drive their Hummers and SUVs, and the campaign should say, "Hey, you slobs, take a look at yourselves in the mirror." She squinted at him and said, "That's not, like, a winning formula."

She got her toughest question at her final event in New Hampshire. "There is a perception out there," said one middle-aged man, "that John is an ambulance-chaser, you know, that he has a large house and lots of money. I constantly hear from other voters that he's a hypocrite."

Elizabeth did not take offense but gave a charming and convincing defense of John's populism:

> The great advocates for the poor have always been people of means, like FDR. The question is not where you are on the ladder, because John is clearly at the top of the ladder. The question is, do you understand the journey? John was born into a family that was rich in a lot of things, but money was not one of them. Maybe it's because he looks back and says, "I was able to climb the ladder," that he notices, "Oh goodness, now the rungs are broken out. But what a great view it is from up here, and wouldn't it be great for everyone else to see what I see?"

She then somehow digressed to her pink jacket and how she'd bought it from some fancy department store in North Carolina but then noticed the same jacket for much less at TJ Maxx.

"Were you upset?" a woman in the crowd shouted.

"No, I returned it, and got the one at TJ Maxx," said Elizabeth. "In a lot of ways, we live like we're still climbing the ladder."

Afterward, a woman who had been trying to find the right words to express why she liked Elizabeth ran up to me: "That's it," she said. "I feel like I can whisper in her ear!" But the story was supposed to be about John, not Elizabeth.

BROOKS KRAFT/CORBIS

When outsiders pry into the private lives of politicians, maneuvering past the 60-second spots and consultant-crafted images, politicians bristle. Remember what Bill Clinton said in his press conference on Monica Lewinsky: "Now, this matter is between me, the two people I love most—my wife and our daughter—and our God."

But the Edwardses always invited the cameras in. Outside of the Clintons, no other campaign is as much of a family affair. Their 25-year-old daughter Cate campaigns, and their younger children live a Truman Show existence, traveling with their parents and sometimes talking to the press. Their staff says the couple embodies the aphorism that "the personal is the political." In the last campaign, aides were often called on to put in the car seats or stock the fridge or find a video. Once a staffer was dispatched to find water wings—in Iowa, in the winter—because, after his events, John liked to swim with Emma Claire and Jack in the hotel pool.

When Elizabeth discovered her cancer had returned, the couple held a press conference in a courtyard at the University of North Carolina—where they had held their wedding reception 30 years earlier. Her stage and treatment plan immediately became public knowledge. The couple's decision to stay in the race became the subject of raw debate about a husband's duty to his dying wife. Katie Couric asked her many intrusive questions about her illness, and how she felt about dying, and Elizabeth said later she didn't mind at all. At the spouse forum, all the other wives fretted about "your

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life getting sucked out from under you," as Michelle Obama put it. But Elizabeth had no patience with that line. "Whichever one of us wins, our life is going to be an open book, so you might as well start practicing and let people embrace you," she lectured them. "You have to open the window and pull back the curtains and let people see whatever it is."

Later, in an interview, she was even harsher: "Give it up!" she told me. "What they're saying is totally unrealistic! Part of being a grown-up is accepting that, if your husband is president, your life will never be private again; your whole life is going to be on the Internet." As a political wife, "you do stand a reasonably good chance of protecting your children against the press," she said. Her conception of protecting the children is some combination of Elizabeth-style bluntness and a Jackie Kennedy–like sense of decorum and public duty.

Earlier this year, she allowed a reporter for *The New York Times* to interview Jack and Emma Claire, who are now seven and nine. She says she asked the children and they wanted to do it, but, by the time it came around, they were no longer in the mood. "I don't want to do this," Jack was quoted in the story as saying, and then John threatened to take him in the back and "have a conversation." For many parents, this public embarrassment might have brought out protective feelings and irritation at the nosy press. But not for Elizabeth. Jack was behaving like a "complete and total pill," she told me, and John was right to threaten to take him in the back. Later, Elizabeth made Jack read the story and watch the accompanying video. "See, this is what happens when you behave like this," she told her son. "It shows up in a paper like *The New York Times*."

"That's not fair. Everyone has a bad day," Jack answered, according to his mom, and then asked if he could call up the reporter on the phone. (She didn't let him.)

Staff from the 2004 campaign describe it as something like an oversized family, with Elizabeth playing both the role of the Godfather and the kooky mom, who had to be persuaded to stop keeping her money in her bra and loved to throw staff parties. But her bluntness was also scary. Elizabeth could love you or she could "rip you to shreds," recalls one staffer. "A lot of people were afraid of her." Sometimes, she would cancel events at the last minute and demand of the staff to explain to her why a given appearance was more important than seeing her children. Once, she was stranded in Cincinnati when all the outgoing flights got canceled. She insisted a staff person drive her back to North Carolina to say good night to the kids, although she had to be in D.C. the next morning. Another time, the staff could find no direct flight for her in and out of Texas for under $2,000. Although they were strapped for cash, they bought her the ticket, "because no one wanted to tell her," one staffer said.

STAN HONDA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Elizabeth admits she was hard to deal with. "This is my fault," she says. "I talk to everyone as if they're my equals. I don't talk up to them, and I don't talk down. But this doesn't work because, where I see them as equals, they see me as a principal, and they can't adjust." She admits she got mad when staff made minor mistakes, but she defends the practice: "If the percentage of college tuition increase on page thirty-six is different from the number on page sixty-three, I'm going to call them up and say, 'This isn't good enough. Why are you giving this to me at all?' "

Many people—most people—living in Elizabeth's wide-open emotional terrain would feel exposed and uncomfortable. This seems to be the case for John, who is by all accounts more private, unknowable, unspontaneous. In the last campaign, when Elizabeth was known for keeping her money in her bra, he was known for delivering the "Two Americas" speech so perfectly that reporters who followed him had learned it by heart, down to the relevant facial gestures.

The 2007 version of Edwards is less controlled, more passionate, more connected to his inner rage, a "fighter," as he says about 23 times a speech. Some people say this is him, angry about the last campaign or about George Bush, or that it's Joe Trippi, Howard Dean's old guru who now works for John. But people who know the couple well say at least part of the transformation is him channeling Elizabeth, who has always been more blunt, more open about her passions, who has always said "exactly what she wants," according to Anania.

On her, these qualities seem natural. On him, the transformation registers as harsh. Last time, *The Des Moines Register* endorsed Edwards. This year, "we too seldom saw the 'positive, optimistic' campaign we found appealing in 2004," the paper wrote last week.

When Elizabeth is accused of reshaping the campaign, she balks. "I have virtually no role," she told me. "I know people find that hard to believe." She insisted that her life was defined by fixing up their vast new house in Chapel Hill and by her ongoing cancer treatments, and that, unlike in the last campaign, she hadn't been on a conference call or to a debate prep in weeks.

Her cancer can be contained for some time with treatments, but long-term prospects are grim: In the standard risk analysis, only a quarter of stage IV cancer patients live five years or more, although, as Edwards readily points out, those numbers reflect patients following outdated protocols. Edwards says she was not destroyed by the diagnosis because "Wade's death insulates me a little bit. Part of grieving is recognizing the loss of control over your life. Something else gets to decide what your life is like and how long you'll live, and that's a pretty powerful realization. Well, I've already accepted that I have no control." ◆

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Mormons and Money

Mitt Romney, his church, and the culture of prosperity.

ALAN WOLFE

Mitt Romney is a Mormon. He is also rich. According to data released by his campaign in August, Romney's net worth is between $190 and $250 million. He earned much of this money at Bain Capital, the private equity firm he started with two partners in 1984. Under Romney's leadership, Bain took advantage of the leveraged buyout craze of the 1980s and '90s to become a wildly profitable corporation.

Romney's business success is not unusual among Mormons. When he left Bain to run the Salt Lake City Olympics of 2002, Romney worked with such accomplished Mormon businessmen as Fraser Bullock (now of Sorenson Capital) and Kem Gardner (a prominent Utah developer). Wealthy Mormons have also played key roles in Romney's presidential campaign. One is Jon Huntsman Sr., founder of the Huntsman Corporation, a $13 billion Salt Lake City enterprise specializing in petrochemicals and plastics, and father of Utah's current governor, Jon Huntsman Jr. Although he does not use it in public, Mitt Romney's first name is Willard; he was named after J. Willard Marriott, founder of the hotel chain, to this day another successful business enterprise run by Mormons—and one that is also active in the Romney camp.

Pick up a book on how to succeed in business, and there's a decent chance that it will have been written by a Mormon. The best known are the many volumes of Stephen Covey, whose books—beginning with *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* in 1989—are "a secular version of Mormonism," according to historian Jan Shipps, our leading interpreter of the LDS faith. This tradition has recently been carried forward in Jeff Benedict's *The Mormon Way of Doing Business*, only here, seven habits are turned into eight people, including the CEO of JetBlue Airlines (David Neeleman) and the former CEOs of Dell Computers (Kevin Rollins), Madison Square Garden (Dave Checketts), Life Re Corporation (Rod Hawes), and Deloitte and Touche (Jim Quigley), as well as the former CFO of American Express (Gary Crittenden)—all members of the LDS Church. The general theme of Benedict's book is that you don't have to go to Harvard Business School to know how to run a successful company. If you are a devoted family member, volunteer, and good churchgoer, as so many Mormons are, that should be enough.

Had you, nonetheless, gone to Harvard Business School between 1995 and 2005, your dean would have been another successful Mormon profiled by Benedict—Kim Clark, who left this prestigious job to become president of the Idaho campus of Brigham Young University. He may be gone, but, if you go to Harvard now, you will likely run into Clayton Christensen, the eighth of Benedict's subjects and a member of the Business School faculty. (Disclosure: Christensen and I have met on a few occasions, and I pester him from time to time with questions about the Mormon religion and Romney's political prospects.) Christensen, a BYU graduate and former Rhodes Scholar, founded three companies and has written his share of business advice books, including *The Innovator's Dilemma* and *The Innovator's Solution*. Christensen, by the way, cannot be described as a "cafeteria Mormon," someone who celebrates some aspects of his tradition while ignoring others. He believes that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that the Book of Mormon "is in fact true."

Most Mormons, of course, do not follow the path of Romney and Christensen and move to Massachusetts. For those who stay behind in Utah, there is Brigham Young University and its Marriott School of Management—which won first place among regional institutions in *The Wall Street Journal*'s recent business-school rankings. Asked which business schools produce the most ethical graduates, the recruiters contacted by the *Journal* ranked BYU second behind Dartmouth's Tuck School and just ahead of Yale. Apparently, the Mormon missionary experience is a major part of Marriott's attraction to recruiters: Employers cannot resist the idea of recent graduates who are a bit older, have lived outside the United States, or have learned foreign languages. (Christensen speaks Korean because of his missionary work.)

Obviously, not all Mormons are successful in business—or, for that matter, life. In their forthcoming book *American Grace*, two political scientists, Harvard's Robert Putnam and Notre Dame's David Campbell, find that Mormons are slightly wealthier than the average American, but not by much: The average income of both Mormon households and non-Mormon households hovers around $50,000 a year. Thirteen percent of Mormon households in their sample earn more than $100,000 a year, higher than 4 percent of Catholic ones but, then again, lower than 27 percent of Jewish ones. Yet, while Mormons are neither far richer nor far poorer than other Americans, a significant number have shown remarkable entrepreneurial ability. It is worth asking why, and particularly now: The answer sheds light not only on Mitt Romney's exceptional business success but also on his presidential prospects.

All inquiries dealing with the relationship between economics and religion take place in the shadow of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, first published in 1904. Weber's insight was to link theological ideas with real-world human behavior: Once salvation was not dispensed through priestly authority, the accumulation of wealth was taken as a sign that you belonged among those elected by God for heavenly reward—in theory, making Protestants better suited to capitalism than Catholics. Ever since Weber, sociologists of religion have been inclined to examine the ideas of religious thinkers to understand the world in which we live.

It is not clear whether such an examination of LDS theology would yield any particular insights into Mormon business success. This is not because Mormon beliefs are less credible than those of other religions: Secular people may laugh at the idea of Joseph Smith coming across a holy book in western New York or discovering that Adam and Eve had lived in western Missouri, but these revelations are neither more nor less believable than Jesus walking on water or Moses parting the sea. It is, however, true that, in comparison to Christianity and Juda-

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ism, Mormonism is a very young religion and, consequently, has not had nearly as much time as its counterparts to develop theological justifications for its miracles. If we are to compare Mormonism to other religions theologically, the relevant markers ought to be Christianity in the year 150 or Judaism in the era of Isaac. Christianity before the Nicene Creed and Augustine left adherents with many unanswered questions—and so does Mormonism today. There is no direct line from the Angel Moroni to the Marriott hotel chain.

But theology is not the only way to understand the links between religion and economics. At the same time as he was publishing *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber came to the United States to visit the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. "On a long railroad journey through what was then Indian territory," he wrote about his visit, "the author, sitting next to a traveling salesman of 'undertaker's hardware' (iron letters for tombstones), casually mentioned the still impressively church-mindedness" of the United States. His interlocutor offered him an explanation: "Sir, for my part everybody may believe or not believe as he pleases; but if I saw a farmer or a businessman not belonging to any church at all, I wouldn't trust him with fifty cents." From that conversation stemmed one of Weber's most insightful concepts. Especially in a newly formed society, Weber concluded, religion serves as a kind of moral credit agency. Businessmen need a way to determine whose credit will be worthy and whose will not. Admission to a congregation is a method of establishing that creditworthiness. And religions with mechanisms for deciding who will belong to them will flourish in a commercial society in a way that religions emphasizing hand-me-down criteria of membership will not.

Weber does not tell his readers through which Indian territory he was passing, but chances are that, half a century before his journey, Mormons had also passed that way on their trek to Utah. In those early days, membership in the LDS Church, by definition, was not inherited from one's parents. Although that is no longer true—Romney belongs to the sixth generation of his family to affiliate with the church, and all of the executives featured in Benedict's book are from long-term Mormon families—Mormonism remains a missionary faith, constantly bringing in new members. (Senator Harry Reid, the highest ranking Mormon in U.S. politics, is a convert.) The frontier may be gone, but capitalism is still a place of risk and reward. If you are a businessman, say a venture capitalist, you want to know something about the people you are dealing with; and, if the people with whom you cooperate are Mormons, you do.

"It is not the ethical *doctrine* of a religion, but that form of ethical conduct upon which *premiums* are placed that matters," Weber wrote after his visit to the United States, as if repudiating the emphasis on theology characteristic of *The Protestant Ethic*. It is too bad he did not reflect on Mormons, for no other religion better fits his thesis that practice counts for more than doctrine. The data collected by Putnam and Campbell offer fascinating insight into this aspect of Mormonism. Much is made of the religious engagement of American evangelicals, who attend church in far greater numbers than mainline Protestants or Jews. But Mormons top evangelicals in all categories of religious activity: Seventy-seven percent attend church weekly compared to 55 percent of evangelicals; 74 percent pray daily compared to 62 percent; and 46 percent read scripture daily compared to 35 percent. When it comes to activities like serving as an officer in a congregation or giving money to one's church, Mormonism's rates far exceed those of every other religion. Even more interesting is the fact that Mormons volunteer in non-religious activities more than any other faith in the United States; the only groups that come close are mainline Protestants and Jews. In other words, the general practices of Mormon life—a high bar for church membership, an expectation that Mormons will take an active role in practicing their faith, an ethic of civic involvement—demonstrate moral creditworthiness in a way that no other American religion can match.

Weber's work contains another insight into the business success of Mormons: his emphasis on the tension within so many religious communities between this-worldly and otherworldly conduct. His best example of an otherworldly consciousness was that of an "ascetic monk" who "has fled from the world by denying himself individual property" and whose "needs have been correspondingly restricted to what was absolutely indispensable." Had Weber needed an "ideal type" to illustrate his ideas about this-worldly religious conduct, Mormons, once again, would have served his purposes. There is, to be sure, an otherworldly dimension to Mormonism, which, to cite just one example, proposes the existence of three levels of heaven rather than the more conventional one. But, if any church is this-worldly, it is the LDS Church. Mormonism does not go in for monks and mystics, especially the latter; mystics tend to go off in directions of their own, which is not something Mormon leaders encourage. Mormons, of course, have a prophet, but prophets are not mystics; God talks to both, but, as Shipps tells me, only prophets pass on what God has to say to the people assembled around them. As important as the prophet Joseph Smith is to Mormons, moreover, there would be no LDS Church without the organizational and entrepreneurial talents of Brigham Young, who had more in common with Robert Moses than the original Moses. Mormons receive revelations, but, Shipps notes, most of them are "pretty practical," usually addressing the question of "What should I do?" It adds up to a form of spirituality that is compatible with worldly success. "Living your faith," Kim Clark informed Jeff Benedict, "means engaging the world. It is not being apart from the world."

A related explanation for Mormons' business success may lie in the religion's organizational structure. Unlike most faiths, the LDS Church does not have a paid clergy. Instead, Mormons rely for leadership on lay people who are "called" to assume the role of bishop in local wards, the LDS term for congregations. The idea of a calling, a Weberian term, does not mean quite the same thing to Mormons that it did to the Lutherans from whom Weber borrowed it. Mormon bishops are not so much called because of an inner light that convinces them to pursue God's path but because the church is always on the lookout for potential leaders. And, of course, these people might learn a thing or two about how to organize others in the business world if they first have success organizing them in spiritual life. Asked about the possible reasons for Mormon entrepreneurship, Philip Barlow, a theologian at Utah State, emphasized "a lay-oriented ecclesiastical organization that rejects a professional ministry and thus promotes hands-on organizational and leadership experience among an entire populace, which yields a disproportionate number of high-level executives." Of course, organizing a ward or a stake—usually between five and ten wards—does not guarantee that you will become a CEO, but it doesn't hurt your chances either.

Mormonism's this-worldly characteristics throw a monkey wrench of confusion into the way Americans think about religion and politics. Why, in contrast to Europeans, do we spend so much time asking candidates about their faith in the

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first place? The answer, presumably, is that we want our politicians to tell us that they are guided by convictions rooted in a powerful moral sensibility taught by a God whose existence transcends this world. But, if politicians invoke religion to claim connection to the transcendental, what is a candidate to do if his religion is not very far apart from this world? Mormonism's this-worldly character gives it a great advantage in the world of business but places it at a great disadvantage in the world of politics—so long, that is, as politicians have to pass a religious litmus test. If the United States were ever to return to a period in which competence counted more than confession, membership in the LDS Church would become an asset. That, however, is not the case in 2008. It almost makes one feel sorry for Mitt Romney, an odd thing to say about a man worth as much as $250 million.

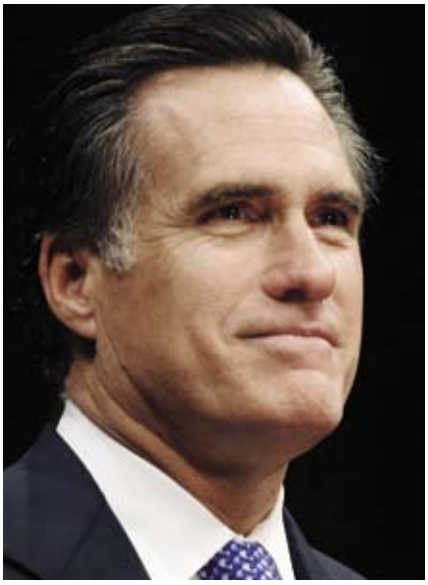
Americans elect millionaires to high office, but they want their millionaires to be just folks. George W. Bush understood this in his two presidential campaigns. He was, to be sure, the scion of a prominent American family, but so was his opponent in 2000. And, when his 2004 opponent combined liberal politics with a taste for windsurfing, Bush's reelection was all but assured. Political success in the United States goes to those who have enough money so that voters will admire and respect them while conveying the impression that money doesn't matter much to them at all.

True of Americans in general, this ambivalence toward money is especially true of American evangelicals. Evangelicals are no longer the kind of downtrodden believers who responded so positively to the vigorous populism of William Jennings Bryan. Yet evangelicalism nonetheless retains a populist sensibility. You don't need to allow yourself to be informed by a priest, as Catholics do—or, I should say, did. Unlike potential converts to Judaism, you don't have to learn much about the language, culture, and theology of the religion you hope to join. All you need to do is look at the life you are leading, find it unfulfilling, and turn to Christ as your personal savior, a process that is available to anyone, however much money they make. Evangelicalism's appeal, as much in our day as during the time of Bryan, is based on this conviction that so long as you are God-fearing, it matters not a whit how outwardly successful you are. This is not, let me hasten to add, true of various forms of prosperity gospel, which judge your spiritual success by your worldly success. But, then again, even the prosperity gospel appeals to the downtrodden more than to those occupying the executive suites.

None of this much helps Mitt Romney. It is true that there are theological reasons why evangelicals distrust Mormons—for one thing, Mormons do not believe in original sin—but evangelicals do not need theology to conclude that there is something suspicious about Romney. He has an intact and perfect family; many Southern Baptists, for all their talk of family values, do not. He ran a company; most Southern Baptists work for one. He does not drink—by now, the picture should be clear. Mormons are what Southern Baptists want to be but never quite become; I will resist the temptation to call them "perfected evangelicals." The fact that Romney's life is so completely without sin ought to make him attractive to them, but it does the reverse. If you lead an unblemished life, you have no need to come to Christ for your salvation. Romney's business success—his worldly achievement—is self-evident. For the evangelicals whose votes he needs in order to win the presidency, that is cause for concern.

As if this did not create enough problems for Romney, he faces an additional obstacle in persuading evangelicals that he is with them in spirit. In an interview with *The New Yorker*'s Ryan Lizza, Jan Shipps pointed out that Mormonism is an ethnicity as much as a religion. "Romney is not Mormon in the way, say, Ted Kennedy is Catholic," she said. "Romney is Mormon the way Ted Kennedy is Irish." Shipps was calling attention to the fact that Mormonism, once a cult, has now become a culture. But her comment also reinforces the widespread idea that Mormons tend to prefer their own. And this turns out to be true. Mormons, Putnam and Campbell found in their survey, are more likely to make friends with coreligionists than any other group in the United States, including African American Protestants.

All religions tend to prefer their own. But evangelicals are less likely to do so than Mormons or even, for that matter, Catholics. There once was an ethnic or clannish dimension to American evangelicalism when so many of its supporters, especially in the South, came from similar Scotch-Irish roots. But the key to



Mitt Romney

Jon Huntsman Sr.

J. Willard Marriott

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understanding American evangelicalism is that you are not born into an evangelical world; you are born "again" into one. The ranks of evangelicals contain large numbers of former Catholics and former Jews. If anything, the further away you are from conservative Protestantism when you convert, the more valuable to the evangelical cause you become. Mormonism, as just about everyone who has ever opened their front door to a stranger knows, is fiercely missionary in its approach; indeed, evangelicals and Mormons compete for converts. But, once people join the LDS Church, they enter a world that is closed to outsiders. Both the local evangelical megachurch and the local Mormon temple may be imposing, but one opens its doors to all who seek to enter and the other does not.

It may not be particularly fair, but, in the eyes of evangelicals, Mormonism's distinct culture transforms the business success of its prominent members—relying as it does partly on the creditworthiness that membership in a fenced-off club confers—into something questionable rather than something admirable. American evangelicals were once fiercely anti-Catholic and inexorably anti-Semitic. Fortunately for the cause of religious tolerance, if not so fortunately for the fate of American liberalism, they now make common cause with Catholics over abortion and consider themselves the best friends of the state of Israel. Today, Mormons have replaced Catholics and Jews in the more diabolical regions of the evangelical mind. And the sense among evangelicals that Romney's wealth has something to do with his relatively closed culture only stands to raise their suspicions.

Will evangelicals vote for Romney anyway? When David Dinkins ran against Rudy Giuliani in the 1989 New York mayoral race, polls showed that more people said they would vote for Dinkins than actually did, leading pollsters to believe that respondents were unwilling to acknowledge possibly prejudiced views. The same thing might happen with respect to evangelicals in the Republican Party; and, if it does, we will never know whether it was because they distrusted Romney's religion, his business success, his culture—or a combination of the three. Chances are that someone who is different may well become our next president. But of the candidates who are most conspicuously different, the Mormon just may have a harder time getting elected than the woman or the African American.

Mitt Romney was my governor for four years. Since 1960, the Democratic Party has shown an unseemly tendency to nominate a disproportionate number of presidential candidates from Massachusetts, and, of the three so chosen, only John Kennedy managed to win. The losses sustained by Michael Dukakis and John Kerry left most Americans with one clear impression: Massachusetts simply is not like the rest of the United States.

Observing Mitt Romney's problems in the 2008 presidential election, I have to conclude that this cliché is correct. For many of us in Massachusetts, the fact that Romney had been a successful entrepreneur was taken as a reason to vote for him. He was not, moreover, all that bad a governor, in part because he knew what he wanted—whether medical insurance for all or a new road to speed Cape Cod dwellers to their homes—and possessed the administrative talents to make it happen. When he ran for the Senate in 1994, his opponent, Ted Kennedy of all people, raised the red flag of Romney's religion. But, since then, his Mormonism has been a non-factor. We all knew that he went to that huge temple out in Belmont, just as we knew that the rest of us were not welcome there; but it did not matter. It just seemed to make sense to us, practical people that we are, to vote for a guy with an impressive resume.

Americans in the rest of the country evidently think differently. For Massachusetts residents, Romney's business acumen was a plus and his religion inconsequential. Elsewhere, his religion seems to be a minus and his business experience irrelevant—or worse. It used to be the case that, if Massachusetts were more like the rest of the country, we would have elected more liberal Democrats to the presidency. But, because it is not, we are likely to be deprived of a competent conservative Republican. This does not disturb me deeply; I can think of no circumstances under which I would vote for Romney over any of the Democrats. But 2008 may well be remembered as the election in which the Republicans, the party of big business, shunned the biggest businessman in their party. For them, it is perfectly okay to succeed in business, but not, it would seem, if you are a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. ◆

Kevin Rollins

Dave Checketts

David Neeleman

JESSICA RINALDI/REUTERS (ROMNEY); FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP (HUNTSMAN); NORM BETTS/BLOOMBERG NEWS/LANDOV (MARRIOTT); JAGADEESH NV/REUTERS (ROLLINS); BILL GREENBLATT/UPI (CHECKETTS); KRISTIN CALLAHAN/ACE PICTURES (NEELEMAN)

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Jerusalem (1)

Whose city – whose "holy city" – is it?

It is forty years since Israel's victory in the Six-Day War in 1967 that the city of Jerusalem, which had been divided for nineteen years has been reunited under Israeli rule. But there is still much talk that the "Middle East problem" cannot be solved unless the city, or at the very least its eastern part, be "returned to its rightful owners," the Muslim Arabs. In fact, this claim for Jerusalem, together with the "return" of the 1948 refugees, whose descendants have miraculously swollen to 5 million, are posited as "non-negotiable demands" in discussions with the Arabs.

What are the facts?

A city of many nationalities. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israeli Defense Forces re-conquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Muslim holy city were rarely, if ever, asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side by side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Muslim Arabs declared their desire to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city back into Arab possession.

> "Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning and of Jewish thinking for over 3,000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital."

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city to Israel in the Six-Day War. It now has gained currency by dint of constant repetition. The basis for the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Muslims and Jews) with its two mosques, El Aksa and the Dome of the Rock. It is the place from which Mohammed, who had never set foot in the city, is believed to have ascended to heaven. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Muslim history did this mosque or this city compare in significance to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina – cities that no "infidel" may visit.

A tenuous Muslim claim. It is on the basis of this religious tradition that the Muslims designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Muslim sensibilities, has largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Muslim control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Muslim tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and if the Muslim Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Muslim claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Muslim Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On the tenuous claim of their right to the Temple Mount, they have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city." And, it would be an insult to all Muslims and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews."

Jerusalem: Never an Arab capital. But the city of Jerusalem – in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus – has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Muslim Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country, since Biblical times. It was the site of one Muslim holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Muslim Arabs until most recent history.

At the center of Jewish life. But Jerusalem has stood at the center of the Jewish people's national life since King David made it his capital in 1003 BCE. After the return from Babylonian exile, Jerusalem again served as the capital of the Jewish people for the next five-and-a-half centuries.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have synagogues and other holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous and people wouldn't accept it. And the Muslim Arab claim to Jerusalem, based on the mosques on the Temple Mount, is just as untenable. Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning and of Jewish thinking for over 3,000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital.

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

CAMERA EXPOSURES

By now it is so common that we almost miss it when it isn't there. When television reports a robbery or a street fight, we wait for the surveillance-camera footage that will intensify the report. We now take it nearly for granted that the world is no longer watched by Big Brother but by Small Camera. (I have had my picture taken getting into a taxi.) Thirty million surveillance cameras, one source says, are now in place in this country, and each of us, in any fairly busy locality, may be snapped two hundred times a day.

These facts, these atmospherics, have percolated in the film-maker Adam Rifkin. Apparently he thought that since surveillance cameras are turning life into film, the spy camera could give film a new verity. Nearly ten years ago, *The Truman Show* treated life as a cosmic television play; now the ubiquitous tiny camera could, for our conditioned eyes, transmute fiction into a reality show. The result is *Look*, shot almost entirely as if in surveillance.

From the start Rifkin must have known that he had to temper his plan. Spy cameras have no sound (as yet), and a silent fictional picture would, oddly, nag at reality, would keep reminding the viewer of the new mode instead of ingesting it. Sound and a few conventional camera sequences of transition had to be added to support what was unconventional.

The very first sequence bamboozles us nicely. A surveillance camera spies on two sixteen-year-old girls in the dressing room of a clothing shop. They strip to try on dresses, and they kid around together. Then one of them puts on her own dress over one that she is stealing, and they move out. (But not out of the rest of the picture.) The scene is so convincingly written and directed by Rifkin that we look forward to more peeking.

Several stories are then woven together, all of them relatively usual except that, through the spy view, we see aspects that deepen their usualness, rather than render them surprising. A sales manager in a huge shop feels up salesgirls behind the counter as he talks to customers; he and various girls sneak into the stock room for quickies. A married man installs a protective viewer in his home so that he can spy on intruders, then is himself observed in an adventure of his own. The butt of office jokes in one company is revealed to be something more complex than a nerd. One of those first teenage girls seduces her high school teacher, for ulterior reasons.

LOOK
Liberated Artists

PROTAGONIST
IFC

BILLY THE KID
Elephant Eye

These stories are all acted with the requisite unconsciousness—that is, the performing is like all film acting, only more so. More, if possible, than in conventional film, these actors must seem unobserved. They must be "off-camera" all the time. Rifkin thus stresses in a new way a standard aim of much realistic film acting: invisibility. No Marlon Brandos or Jack Nicholsons need apply.

ANTHONY RUSSO

The stories all have at least a modicum of interest, but the most striking aspect of *Look* is the way in which it looks, not what it sees. Its materials confirm that the essence of this new viewing mode is embarrassment. We all do at least a few things every day that we are glad to keep private. Now we live in the round, completely encircled by eyes. Prime, however, is the fact that Rifkin touches, albeit slightly, a philosophical theme that Beckett dramatized in his one film (called *Film*). Beckett based his work on an idea of Berkeley's, *Esse est percipi*—"To be is to be perceived." More: existence depends on being perceived. Therefore the surveillance camera is ruthlessly expanding existence. But for Beckett as for Berkeley, the idea of perception meant the eyes of people around us; now it means thirty million additional eyes. In Beckett's and Berkeley's and Rifkin's terms, existence has become absolutely engulfing.

But the camera is a diabolically clever contraption. Not only is it a spy, in many instances it is an intoxicant—of civilians as well as actors. *Protagonist* by Jessica Yu would not exist if she had not been able to induce four men to speak on camera about their privacies. No doubt Yu herself was persuasive; but the fact that these intimate chronicles were going to be filmed and recorded, that they were going to be on screen, surely helped overcome reticence. (Thus is the word "paradox" redefined.)

Protagonist braids the life stories of four men worth investigation. Yu, however, has burdened them with irrelevant baggage. She says that she started out to make a film about Euripides (!), and in re-reading some of the plays she found that the problems of those characters still trouble human beings. Recovering from the shock of this revelation, she decided to deal with some contemporaries as bearers of perennial agons, and she certified her classicism by interrupting her interviews with Attic drawings and masked figures, along with bits of Euripidean choruses in classic Greek. But the relevance of the much-quoted *Bacchae*—about a god's vengeance on an offensive mortal—

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to any of Yu's four men is a wee bit remote. All this classic decor only burdens her real achievement here: she used the very prospect of film to get four men to speak colorfully about their troubled lives.

Hans-Joachim Klein, a German, was a terrorist in the Baader-Meinhof days. (His talk is subtitled.) As a youth he went through the spasms of revulsion about the German past and much of the German present that afflicted thousands of young Germans (and were so memorably treated in Margarethe von Trotta's *Marianne and Juliane*). For Klein, terrorism seemed the only moral response to contemporary conditions, which led to crime and punishment. After prison, now middle-aged, he works on a French farm, reconciled apparently to the world as it is because he once tried jaggedly to improve it.

Joe Loya comes from a Mexican-American family. Beaten badly by his father, he left home as soon as he could and, out of motives that he understood, tried to build a person for himself by robbing banks. He says that he liked the money, of course, but liked even more the feeling of self and power. His robberies succeeded more than thirty times, then came jail and prison. Eventually paroled, he now works as a journalist, which is easy to believe after hearing his vivid descriptions.

Mark Salzman, physically small, comes from an affectionate family and, in an almost good-natured way, was surprised by his treatment at the hands—and feet—of his schoolmates. His size and delicacy soon brought him taunts and insults about his sexuality. In the course of time he studied martial arts, became proficient, and met the boy who had been his most vicious tormentor. That boy was impressed with Salzman's skills, studied martial arts as well, and became Salzman's buddy.

The life of the fourth man, Mark Pierpont, is the stuff of a film, not merely one story in a multiple film. Pierpont has made a journey through sincerities, each of which was genuine at the moment, and each of which conflicted with what preceded or followed it. As a boy, Pierpont discovered that he was homosexual, and, as he grew, he lived a homosexual life contentedly. Then he met an attractive young woman, began to view homosexuality as an affliction, left it, married, and became a missionary in Asia with his wife, exulting in what he considered his new-won purity. But more changes occurred: the conclusion of Pierpont's story—to date—is a stunner.

Yu, whose directing has grace, is now preparing a comedy. Good. At least she (presumably) won't be able to haul Euripides into that one.

The camera is not short of other blandishments. Besides seducing the reserved person into volubility just by looking at him, it can seduce the film-maker herself to exaggerate the value of what she is doing simply because it is on film. Thus anything filmed seriously must ipso facto be taken seriously and, by its very being, deserves attention.

This camera wile has worked on Jennifer Venditti in her debut documentary, *Billy the Kid*. The title is a mild prank: this Billy is a fifteen-year-old Maine high school boy. Venditti follows him through several seasons of his personal, family, and school life. Billy is loquacious, bright, sure that he is exceptional in some way, troublesome but not excessively so. He has an intelligent and wise mother. (His father is away, living in Florida. In some still shots, his face is deliberately blurred.) In due course, Billy gets his first girlfriend, a waitress in a luncheonette that he frequents, and they go through initial romantic rites. Expectable things continue to happen.

So, articulate though he is, all through the film we keep wondering: why Billy? As against the particular qualities of the men in *Protagonist*, this documentary could have been made about thousands of other fifteen-year-olds. We are led to suspect that Billy was chosen because he was garrulous and smart and because he likes movies and wanted to be in one. As for Venditti, we can infer that when she began to see this material on film, it confirmed her venture simply because there it was, engraved on film. *Billy the Kid* is not a series of home videos: Venditti has visual skill. But her film is less a broadening of our experience than proof of the narcotics that lurk in the camera. ◆

Amartya Sen

IMPERIAL ILLUSIONS

India, Britain, and the wrong lessons.

I.

As I entered secondary school in the mid-1940s in what was still British India, I remember thinking that, despite our irritation with the British, it was rather agreeable that the favorite military music of the British Army was "Beating the Retreat." There was little sign in 1944 that the British were about to evacuate the country, despite the swelling torrent of the Indian national movement led by Gandhi and other political leaders; but the decisive moment was not far off. It came rather abruptly in 1947, sixty years ago, ushering in the beginning of the end of "the biggest empire ever, bar none," as Niall Ferguson describes it in his book *Empire*, a guarded but enthusiastic celebration of British imperialism. While this year the Indian newspapers have been full of festivity for what has been achieved in six decades of independence, it is worth remembering more soberly that this is also the anniversary of the end of a very long imperial relationship.

As the year 2007 trails away, it is a good time to take a general look back at the history of the domination of a hot, sunny, and vast subcontinent in the Orient by rulers from a small kingdom in rainy, windy, cool—and very far away—islands on the western coast of Europe. In India, indeed, this is a year of anniversaries. Not only did that imperial rule of the subcontinent end sixty years ago, it also began 250 years ago, with a small but hugely repercussive event in 1757. On June 23 of that year, Robert Clive led the forces of the East India Company to defeat the Nawab of Bengal in the battle of Plassey, thereby initiating British control of state power in India. The battle lasted all of a day, but it is still seen as a memorable event both in Britain and in the subcontinent; and when I gave a commemorative lecture last June in the London City Hall, the mixed nature of the large audience made it vividly clear to me that the recollection of that one-day war a quarter of a millennium ago still interests people of diverse ancestry and origin, living now in post-imperial Britain.

And there is another momentous anniversary that broaches the question of

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what imperialism did for, and to, India. It is now exactly one hundred fifty years since the first armed battle for the end of the British domination that engulfed the subcontinent. The uprising, which united very different rebellious groups under one banner of revolt, started in March 1857 in Barrackpore, on the outskirts of Calcutta, not far from Plassey, and spread across India. It was ultimately crushed by the British, with the help of Gurkha, Pathan, and Sikh troops, who were not involved in the revolt. The squashed rebellion, which has variously been called "the Sepoy Mutiny" (the official term used by the British) and "the first war of independence" (favored by many Indian nationalists), was in fact responsible for the British decision to make India directly a part of the empire, rather than continuing to rule it indirectly through the East India Company.

The story of British rule in India is of more than historical interest. It has been suggested that the annals of the British empire are relevant to significant policy issues in the world today. The British empire is invoked persistently these days to discuss the demands of successful global governance. It is used to persuade the United States to acknowledge its new role as the unique imperial power today, an invitation and an inspiration—and perhaps even an instigation—for which Ferguson speaks powerfully in his ultimately rather didactic book on the British empire. Ferguson is concerned that despite America's leading role in the world today, which could be exercised with pride and responsibility rather than with embarrassment and confusion, America is evading its true historical task. In his view, the United States now runs a de facto empire "that dare not speak its name." He calls it "an empire in denial."

Ferguson asks an important question: "Should the United States seek to shed or to shoulder the imperial load it has inherited?" We may doubt whether America's effective power in the world today is comparable to that of Britain in its imperial heyday, and we may not agree with him that this is "the most burning contemporary question of American politics"; but it certainly is an urgent query and an interesting one. Ferguson is also right to argue that the question cannot be answered "without an understanding of how the British Empire rose and fell; and of what it did, not just for Britain but for the world as a whole." So the cluster of anniversaries of British rule in what was the largest part of the empire—"the jewel in the crown"—is a good occasion to try to get some clarity on those questions, too.

How tidy and how regular were the processes that led to the emergence of the largest empire in history? How great were the achievements of this empire that was emphatically not "in denial"? The latter is a tricky question to answer, and even to formulate adequately, since it is extremely difficult to judge the effects of specific developments in history. The temptation to compare the subcontinent in 1947, when British rule ended, with what India was in 1757, at the time of the battle of Plassey, is hard to resist, and this forms the subject matter of a good deal of the analysis of what British empire did—and did not—achieve. But in fact that comparison tells us little about the consequences of the empire, since the subcontinent would have moved on over that long period to something different from what it was in 1757 had India not been conquered by the British.

To illustrate the ground for my skepticism, consider another comparison—a hypothetical scenario, what philosophers call a counterfactual assumption. Imagine if Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States Navy, who steamed into the bay of Edo in Japan with four warships in 1853, had been not the leader of a pure show of American force (as was actually the case), but instead the front guard in an assumed American conquest of Japan. If we were to assess the achievements of this supposed American rule of Japan by comparing Japan before that imagined American domination in 1853 with Japan after that domination were to end, we would omit all the effects of the Meiji restoration in 1868, as well as all the other globalizing changes that were yet to come, which radically transformed the nature of Japan as a country and a society and of course as an economy. Dates—1757, 1853—are stationary, but the process of history is not.

Dayanita Singh, *Gandhi, Trivandrum,* 2000

It is not easy to guess with any confidence how the history of the subcontinent would have gone had the British conquest not occurred. Would India have moved, like Japan, toward modernization in an increasingly globalizing world, or would it have stayed resistant to change, like Afghanistan, or hastened slowly, like Thailand? We could not assess "the results of the British rule" without being sure what the alternative

COURTESY STEIDL

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would have been (rather than simply assuming that India would have stayed locked for two centuries into whatever it was in 1757). Still, even in the absence of such big comparisons of alternative historical scenarios, there are more limited questions that can be asked—and to a considerable extent answered—which may help us to an intelligent understanding of the role that British rule actually played in India.

II.

What were the challenges that India faced at the time of the British conquest, and what happened in those critical areas during the British rule? To recognize a need for some change in India in the mid–eighteenth century does not require us to deny the achievements of India's ancient civilization, with its rich history of accomplishments in philosophy, mathematics, literature, arts, music, medicine, and a variety of academic studies such as linguistics and astronomy. India also had much success in building flourishing economies with large trade and commerce—both internal and external—well before the colonial period, and the economic wealth of India was plentifully acknowledged by British observers and commentators.

Yet it is hard to doubt that India had fallen well behind the modernization that was occurring in Europe by the eighteenth century. In some insightful essays on India that Karl Marx published in the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1853, he discussed the constructive effects of British rule in India, on the ground that India needed some serious shaking in its stagnant pause at the time of the British conquest. Without disputing Marx's thesis about the need for substantial change in eighteenth-century India (a thesis that is, I think, basically correct), one could question his further assumption that the British conquest was the only window to the modern world that could have opened for India. What was needed at the time was more global involvement—but that is not the same thing as imperialism.

It is worth noting here that throughout India's long history there were persistent exchanges of ideas and commodities with the outside world. Traders, settlers, and scholars moved from India to the east—Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, and elsewhere—for a great many centuries, beginning nearly two thousand years ago; and the far-reaching influence of these movements, especially on language, literature, and architecture, can be seen quite plentifully even today. There were also huge avenues of global influence coming into the country through India's open-frontier role in welcoming fugitives and other settlers from abroad, from very early days. Jewish immigration into India began right after the fall of Jerusalem in the first century, and continued over many centuries. (Baghdadi Jews, such as the highly successful Sassoons, came in large numbers even as late as the eighteenth century.) Christians started coming in the fourth century, and Parsees in the late seventh century (as soon as persecution commenced in their homeland). Muslim Arab traders began to settle in coastal India in the eighth century. Persecuted Bahais came much later. In fact, India has for most of its history played a similar role to modern Britain and America, as a home for fugitives.

It is difficult to conclude, therefore, that India had to depend only on Britain as its sole guide to the changing contemporary world in the eighteenth century—or at any other time. In fact, there were long-established trading connections, stretching back nearly two thousand years, of people in the exact locality, near the mouth of the Ganges, from where the East India Company launched its first conquest of India in the eighteenth century. The evidence for this can be found not only in Indian accounts, but also in the writings of such authors as Claudius Ptolemy in the second century, who treated this region in some detail, and identified a number of towns and cities that were engaged in trading and other economic activities for a global economy. Pliny the Elder also provided descriptions of the open and flourishing economy of this region.

When the East India Company undertook the battle of Plassey and defeated the Nawab of Bengal, there were businessmen, traders, and other professionals from a number of different European nations already in that very locality. Their primary involvement was in exporting textiles and other industrial products from India, and the river Ganges (or Hughly, as it is more often called in that part of India), on which the East India Company had its settlement, also had (further upstream) trading centers and settled communities from Portugal, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Prussia, and other European nations.

Being subjected to imperial rule is not the only way of learning things from abroad, no matter how necessary such learning may be. When the Meiji restoration established a new reformist government in Japan in 1868 (which was not unrelated to the internal political impact of Commodore Perry's show of force in the previous decade), the Japanese went full steam into learning from the West, sending people for training in America and Europe, and making institutional changes that were clearly inspired by western experience. They globalized themselves voluntarily. They were not coercively globalized by others. The shaking of India, too, could have come in non-colonialist ways.

It is true that it was Britain that did, in fact, play the role of India's pre-eminent Western contact, and this was certainly connected, and quite intimately, with the empire. To recognize this, however, is not in any way to rule out the alternative scenarios that could have occurred in the absence of India's colonial subjugation—that is a separate question altogether. But what did actually happen deserves our special attention, as the process of change that in fact occurred. Consider Christopher Bayly's important point (in his definitive book *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914*) that the Calcutta intellectual Ram Mohun Roy, born in 1772, "made in two decades an astonishing leap from the status of a late-Mughal state intellectual to that of the first Indian liberal," who "independently broached themes that were being simultaneously developed in Europe by Garibaldi and Saint-Simon." To understand Roy's creativity, it is necessary to see that his far-reaching deliberations were influenced not only by his traditional knowledge of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian texts, but also very strongly by the growing familiarity of Indian intellectuals with English writings circulating in Calcutta under the East India Company's patronage.

Related to the general question about what India needed at the time of the British conquest, there is also an important thesis about the need for uniting India, which is often presented by theorists of British imperialism as one of the great services that the empire performed. It is argued that India was not one country at all, but a divided land mass and a fragmented population spread over an area of the size of a continent, and that it was the British empire that welded India into a nation. It can certainly be argued, with considerable plausibility, that the kind of change that happened in Japan after the Meiji restoration would have been very hard to organize for a country as large and as fragmented as India.

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When Robert Clive's forces of the East India Company defeated the Nawab of Bengal in 1757, there was certainly no unifying power ruling all of India.

Yet it would be a gigantic leap from there to the British claim that they united India, a thesis that is usually garnished by such observations as Winston Churchill's remark that India had been no more a country than was the Equator. In fact, the ambitious and energetic emperors of India from the third century B.C.E. onward—Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, the later Chandragupta of the Gupta dynasty, Alauddin Khilji, the Mughal emperor Akbar, and others—did not accept that their regimes were complete until the bulk of what they took to be one country was united under their rule. Indian history shows a sequential alternation of large domestic empires and clusters of fragmented kingdoms. As it happens, British rule began at a time when the Mughals had declined in power, though formally even the Nawab of Bengal, whom the British defeated, was a subject of the Mughal emperor. The Nawab still swore allegiance to the Mughal emperor, without paying very much attention to the formality of the empire.

In that special situation, then, the British did make a big difference. The most likely successors to the Mughals, the newly emerging Hindu Maratha rulers from near Bombay, periodically sacked the Mughal capital of Delhi and continued to exercise their military power across the country. (The East India Company had already built a huge ditch in 1742, called "the Maratha ditch," at the edge of Calcutta, to slow down the lightning raids of the Maratha cavalry, coming across much more than a thousand miles.) But the Marathas were still quite far from putting together anything like the design of an all-India empire.

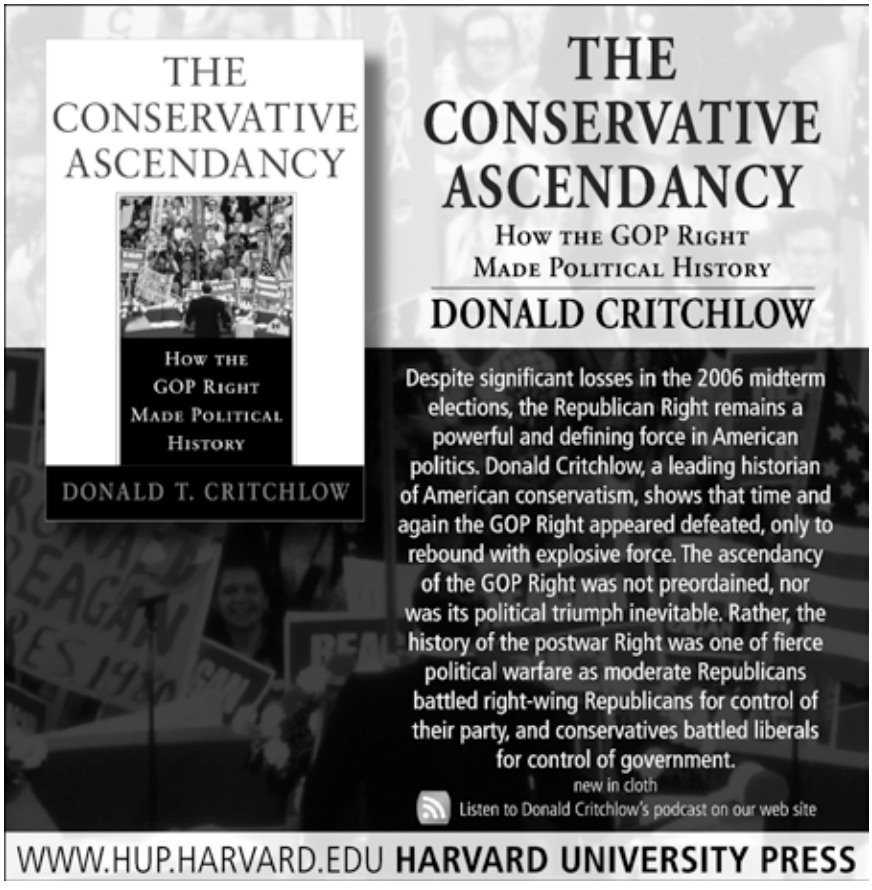
Like previous Indian emperors, the British were not satisfied until they were the dominant power across the bulk of the subcontinent, and in this regard they were not bringing a new vision of a united India so much as acting as the successors to previous domestic empires. For an adequate understanding of what was happening at the time of the British conquest, it is important that we do not make the mistake of assuming that the fragmented governance of mid-eighteenth-century India was exactly the state in which the country typically found itself throughout its history, until the British came along helpfully to unite it; and at the same time we must not fail to see what the British did actually accomplish as they filled up the imperial vacuum, through a sequence of conquests that began in Plassey.

Why was it so easy for the British to defeat the Nawab of a part of India, namely Bengal, that was quite well-known in Europe as a rich kingdom? The battle was swift, beginning at dawn and ending close to sunset on that June day in 1757. It was a normal monsoon day, with occasional rain in the town of Plassey, situated among mango groves between Calcutta, where the British were based, and the capital, Murshidabad, of the Nawab of Bengal. It was in those mango groves that the British forces faced the Nawab Siraj-ud-Doula's army and promptly defeated it. The British, with a much smaller army, had much greater fire power, but perhaps more importantly, Robert Clive had taken the precaution of making use of—and to a great extent fostering—a treacherous development within the Nawab's government. The person at the center of the treason was Mir Jafar, the Nawab's uncle, who had a leading role in the conspiracy against young Siraj, and whose desire to seize the throne was both strong and strongly encouraged by Clive.

Mir Jafar's role was quite crucial for Clive's early victory. Right in the middle of the battle of Plassey, the big division of the army that Mir Jafar commanded on the Nawab's side suddenly left the fight and quit. In the evening of the battle, after Clive had won, he received a felicitating letter from Mir Jafar: "I congratulate you on executing your design." Clive killed Siraj, the defeated Nawab, and put Mir Jafar, the key conspirator, on the throne, with nominal power, at the mercy of his British guardians. The empire began, then, in an event that can hardly be seen as a regular and straight military conquest. If Plassey had been a cricket match, it seems plausible that Skipper Clive would have been disallowed from participating in further games for many years to come.

But it was not a cricket match, and not only did Robert Clive continue to command British operations in India, building up the company's empire, he also waxed eloquent on his achievements in Plassey in his deposition before a Parliamentary Committee in London in 1772:

> Consider the situation in which the victory at Plassey had placed me! A great prince was dependent on my pleasure; an opulent city lay at my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How the GOP Right Made Political History
DONALD T. CRITCHLOW
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How the GOP Right Made Political History
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mercy; its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles; I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels! Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation.

III.

The location of the early imperial events in Bengal reflected the deep interest of the British merchants in the trade and commerce of the region. Since the British search for political control was clearly driven by financial interests, the regional connection is indeed important. The trading and commercial activities of the region had flourished under the strong state power of Hindu and Buddhist rulers, and then of Pathan and Mughal Muslim kings. By the time Clive arrived in Bengal, those days of strong state power had dimmed substantially. There now came the days of political and military insecurity, in which the intermixing of trading and civil and military power was so extensive that the idea of doing business without having a pliant political regime would have appeared increasingly naïve.

The British did not create the entanglement in India of state power and commerce. It had already existed in politically decadent but hugely prosperous Bengal. What was special about the early period of the East India Company's rule, the early imperial innovation, was the way the company used the mixture of trade and state power. Clive and his associates, and then his immediate successors, used state power to make huge sums of money, for the company and for themselves. The money came not only from the state treasury of Bengal (the puppet Nawab had no choice in the matter), but also from the conspirators, including the local bankers, whom the British had helped.

What has been widely called "the financial bleeding of Bengal" began very soon after Plassey. With the Nawabs under their control, the East India Company made big money from territorial revenues, and also from the unique privilege of duty-free trade in the rich economy of Bengal—all this not counting bribes and so-called gifts that the company was also in a position to extract from local merchants. If Americans are to be inspired by the disciplined regularity of early British rule in India, they would do well to avoid reading Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, particularly Smith's discussion of the abuse of state power by a "mercantile company that oppresses and domineers in the East Indies." While most of the loot accrued to British company officials in Bengal, there was widespread participation in all this by the political and business leadership in Britain. Indeed, nearly a quarter of the members of Parliament in London owned stock in the East India Company in the 1760s, the decade that followed Plassey (as Robert Travers discusses in his illuminating book *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth-Century India: The British in Bengal*). The commercial interests at the beginning of the empire in India reached far into the British establishment.

The robber-ruler synthesis eventually did give way to the emergence of what would soon become classical colonialism, with the recognition of the need for law and order and for a modicum of reasonable governance. The early misuse of state power by the East India Company put the economy of Bengal under huge stress. What the leading English cartographer John Thornton had described, in his famous chart of the region in 1703, as "the Rich Kingdom of Bengal" experienced a gigantic famine during 1769–1770. Contemporary estimates suggested that about one-third of the Bengal population died in the famine. This is almost certainly an overestimate, but even if the mortality was quite a bit lower than that, it was clearly a huge catastrophe, with massive starvation and death—in a century that had seen no famine in the region before the rule of the East India Company began.

The disaster had at least two strong effects. First, the economic decline of Bengal eventually damaged the company's business as well, hurting the British investors; and so the powers in London had reason to change the running of their part of India into more of a regular state-like operation. Second, the iniquity of early British rule in India began to receive considerable political criticism in Britain itself, as its disastrous consequences became clear. By the time Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, penned his famous judgment that the East India Company was "altogether unfit to govern its territorial possessions," there were many British voices making the same point. The strongest indictment came, of course, from Edmund Burke, in his eloquent parliamentary speech at the impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1789. Even though it can be argued that Burke's thesis about Hastings's personal perfidy was seriously misplaced (Hastings tried and to some extent succeeded in stopping comprehensive British pillage, in contrast with his predecessors in charge of the company), Burke's general diagnosis of the extent of nastiness of the company's rule of India was not mistaken. The period of so-called "post-Plassey plunder" with which British rule in India began was by then giving way to the sort of colonial subjugation that would soon become the imperial standard, and with which the subcontinent would become more and more familiar over the following century and a half.

The spread of British rule to the rest of the country happened on the basis of that unsavory foundation. As the East India Company's power expanded across India, Calcutta became the capital of the newly emerging empire (it occupied that position from the mid–eighteenth century until 1911, when the capital would again be shifted to Delhi, this time by the British themselves), and it was from Calcutta that the conquest of other parts of India was planned and commanded. The profits made by the East India Company in its economic operations in Bengal to a great extent financed the wars that the British waged across India in this period of colonial expansion.

Indeed, by the time of Plassey, quite independently of the British, power was slipping away from Mughal hands in Delhi. The Mughal authority had been weakened by other local forces, in particular Afghan invaders, as well as the Marathas from the west of India, who periodically raided and captured Delhi. Even though schoolchildren still read in history books that the British seized the running of India from the Mughals, the British did not in fact have to take on the Mughals when they really were a power.

And yet the status of the Mughal authority over India continued to be widely acknowledged. When the so-called "sepoy mutiny" shook the foundations of the British administration of India in 1857, the diversity of forces participating in that anti-British revolt could agree only on the formal legitimacy of the Mughal emperor—who was himself extremely reluctant to get into all this. The rebels declared that the emperor of all of India was the hesitant eighty-two-year-old Mughal monarch Bahadur Shah II, known

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by his pen name Zafar, whose authority did not extend very far beyond the city walls of Delhi, and who was far more interested in reading and writing poetry than in fighting and killing. Zafar, who would be banished to Burma after the end of the mutiny, could do little even to help the 1,400 unarmed civilians of Delhi whom the victorious British killed as the city was effectively destroyed. (The complexities of the poet-emperor are brought out beautifully by William Dalrymple in his biography *The Last Mughal*). The British saw their massacre of non-combatant citizens of Delhi as retaliation for the butchery earlier committed by the mutineers.

So the British did place India eventually under a unifying administration—something it lacked earlier in the eighteenth century. The process through which this was done was hardly regular or admirable, but a political unity was indeed achieved. Yet there remains the matter of the unity of the subcontinent across its religious divisions—a matter that reverberates in our own day as well. Under the period of the British rule of the subcontinent, much would be made of the allegedly irreconcilable hostility between Hindus and Muslims in India, and it may be tempting to conclude that this was what ruined Siraj, the Nawab of Bengal, and aided Clive in his victory. Such a suspicion could be fed further by the fact that while Mir Jafar, the Nawab's uncle and obviously a Muslim, was the ringleader of the conspiracy against Siraj, Clive did have the backing of many of the Hindu and Jain bankers who were largely responsible for the financial operations of Murshidabad, the Nawab's capital. In fact, the highly influential banker Jagat Seth (this was a title originally given by the Mughal emperor, meaning "the banker to the world") and his cousin Swarup Chand were directly in league with the British.

And yet it would be a huge mistake to see the political divisions in Indian society as a Hindu-Muslim rift. The establishment of the empire involved many irregular and not particularly honorable events, but the exploitation of some preexisting Hindu-Muslim political rift was not one of them, for there was no such rift to exploit. The mutiny of 1857 found Hindu and Muslim rebels in a joint front, with a shared recognition of the unique legitimacy of the Mughal emperor as the formal royal authority over India. It was much later, as the empire ran its course and the national movements for independence became powerful, that religion-centered political conflicts emerged in particular ways—in the development of which it would be hard to ignore the role of the British rulers, as Gandhi complained, in providing encouragement to religious divisions, which gave the British good grounds to stay on and run the subcontinent.

Much earlier in the history of the subcontinent, with invasions from West Asia, there had been battles in which mainly Muslim invaders had fought mainly Hindu locals. But that situation changed radically over the centuries, and by the eighteenth century the Hindu-Muslim mixing was fairly ubiquitous at the political level. Sometimes even the religious divisions themselves were systematically breached—for example, in the constructive hybrid religiosity of poets such as Kabir and Dadu, and later the Bauls of Bengal, who combined Muslim (mainly Sufi) ideas with Hindu (mainly Bhakti) notions. At the political level, there were variations over time. While the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb did subject non-Muslims to extra taxes, Akbar, the "great Mughal," had spurned such an approach, and had even given the command of his army to a Hindu general.

Religious distinctions did not play an especially divisive role at the time of Clive. The domestic divisions that led to the easy victory of the British in Plassey were based on the expectations of economic gain and political power. Both Hindus and Muslims were on all sides of this divide, some of them on both sides simultaneously. Siraj's chief minister, Mohan Lal, was a Hindu who was particularly keen on suppressing Jagat Seth, who in turn saw his main rival to be another member of the same Hindu-Jain business clan, Omi Chand. The battle for financial privileges in Murshidabad was mainly between members of the same clan.

When Clive was marching toward Plassey for the battle (but still pretending, with some success, to be seeking peace with Siraj), he wrote to Siraj proposing that their disputes could be arbitrated by people whom the young Nawab trusted, namely, as Clive put it, "Jagat Seth, Raja Mohan Lal, Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh, Mir Madan, and the rest of your great men"—a list of one Muslim and four Hindus in the top inner circle of the Muslim Nawab. Siraj's governance did not have any policy of giving priority to Muslims. Siraj had

Dayanita Singh, *Nehru's Coat, Anand Bhavan, Allahabad,* 2000

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placed a Hindu, Mir Madan, in a high position in his court. Madan and Mohan Lal were among the few commanders to remain loyal to the Nawab to the very end, and they died fighting, in Plassey. The divisions within the Indian establishment, which Clive exploited, were entirely on different lines from that of religion.

IV.

India needed less inwardness and more global interaction than it had in the eighteenth century, and these the British did provide. But India received these attainments in the special form of imperial dominance—that is, with a huge lot of other baggage. India's traditional industrial advantage, reflected in its export surplus in industrial goods in the eighteenth century, was soon replaced by its becoming a large importer of industrial products. The industrial revolution and the increased need for mechanized production called for domestic change and technical modernization—but this came far too slowly, and so the greatest exporter of textiles in the world became a large importer from Manchester and elsewhere in Britain. Indian agriculture remained stagnant for a very long period—indeed, right up to independence. And India's indigenous capacity for the independent delivery of law, order, and administration was replaced, under colonial rule, by foreign control, with a very subsidiary role given to Indians in the hierarchy of power.

There occurred also a general collapse of Indian self-confidence, linked with the basic colonial attitude of the masters to the subjects under their rule. As it happens, in the early period of British dominance in the eighteenth century, the extent of racial prejudice, when present, was relatively low, despite the ongoing economic plunder of India. At the cultural level, there was considerable British interest in India's ancient civilization. William Jones, an East India Company officer, was a great pioneer of studies of India's past, including its ancient history, and Warren Hastings, so reviled by Burke, was a patron of Indian scholarship (he tried to acquaint himself with local culture, learned some Bengali, Urdu, and Persian, and encouraged Sanskrit studies). But in the subsequent phase of regular colonialism, racism was fairly rampant within the British administration of India.

James Mill's book *History of British India*, published in 1817, written by Mill without ever visiting India and without knowing a single Indian language, became something of a bible for all British officials sent to India to run the country. "Our ancestors," Mill explained in his hugely influential book, "though rough, were sincere; but under the glosing exterior of the Hindu, lies a general disposition to deceit and perfidy." Mill was also convinced that the natives had "in reality made but a few of the earliest steps in the progress to civilization," and that Indian civilization was on a par with other inferior ones known to Mill—"very nearly the same with that of the Chinese, the Persians, and the Arabians." He also put in this category the "subordinate nations, the Japanese, Cochin-Chinese, Siamese, Burmans, and even Malays and Tibetans." Mill was impressively even-handed in his contempt for non-Western cultures. But it mattered greatly more in the case of India, since his views made a critical difference to the way India was governed by the British.

The leading British administrator of India in the mid–nineteenth century, T. B. Macaulay, who wrote the famous "Minute" on "Indian Education" in 1835 that would govern the structure of what Indians would be taught over a century, thought that Mill's thoroughly prejudiced book was "on the whole the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon." Macaulay's own approach and inclinations fitted well with Mill's: "I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic.... I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."

If the lessons to be taught to Americans about how best to run their de facto empire are to be based on the character and balance of British administration and the actual beliefs that influenced it, a certain amount of make-believe history would be needed. When the British left India in 1947, after nearly two hundred years of imperial rule, the proportion of adult literacy was around 13 percent. This abysmal figure reflects a certain view of the needs of the subject nation as seen by the dominant administrators from the ruling country—a country that had done so much to make its own population completely literate. The only regions in India with comparatively high literacy in India were the "native kingdoms" of Travancore and Cochin, which since Indian independence have constituted the bulk of the state of Kerala. These kingdoms, though dependent on the British administration for foreign policy and defense, had remained formally outside the British empire and had enjoyed a great deal of freedom in domestic matters, including educational policy.

The gap between theory and practice remained strong throughout the history of imperial relations between Britain and India. Rudyard Kipling issued his own invitation to the United States to follow Britain's alleged imperial success, in his famous poem "The White Man's Burden," published in *McClure's* in 1899 under the subtitle "The United States and the Philippine Islands." He may have caught the self-perception of the British administrator well when he explained, "Take up the White Man's burden / The savage wars of peace / Fill full the mouth of Famine, / And bid the sickness cease." And yet British governance of India had little success in its self-congratulatory role to "fill full the mouth of Famine." Indeed, British rule began with a gigantic famine in Bengal in 1769-1770; there had been none in that century before British conquest. And there were famines in India throughout the period of British rule, ending with another large famine in Bengal, the famine of 1943, in which close to three million people died, just before independence in 1947. There has been no such famine in India since British rule ended sixty years ago.

In assessing Britain's relation with India in this year of anniversaries, we must make a clear distinction between the positive contributions of the British in bringing India more closely into the global world (including many domestic institutional changes) and the plentiful presence of inequity and negligence in British imperial rule. It is important to appreciate the positive impact of India's British association, but also to recognize that the changes that were important for India could have come without the colonial adversities. India's approach to the contemporary world was certainly aided by many initiatives that can be linked to British influence, and many of these potentials have come into their own only after the end of the colonial rule.

This applies to the practice of democracy, with its elaborate institutional structure. Even though "government by discussion" has had a long tradition in India that makes democracy blossom well (as I have discussed in *The Argumentative Indian*, and also in these pages in "The Global Roots of Democracy," October 6, 2002), the British did make a big contribution, which was of particular use only after the British left.

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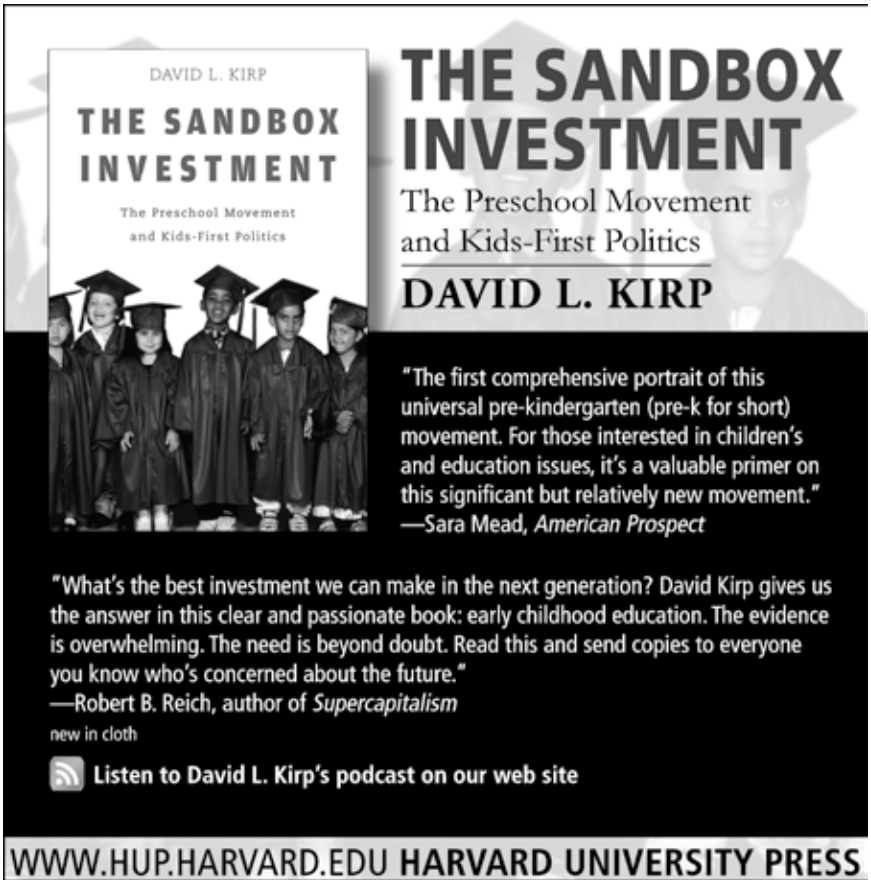
India's media, often censured and penalized in the imperial days, now flourish in a freer and more supportive atmosphere, but they do carry clear marks of British influence (mostly of Britain itself, rather than of the Raj). So do many legal institutions, often restrained and repressed in imperial days but now in fuller use. And if India is a flourishing world economy today—with its rapid growth including such oddities as the Indian industrial company, the Tatas, buying up what is nearly the bulk of the British steel industry—the foundations of many of the facilitating changes go back to the period of British rule, even if the alien rulers very often did the opposite of helping those facilities as part of their colonial policy. In 1906, the Tatas had been completely rebuffed by the London money market in their unassisted efforts to raise the funds for setting up a steel mill in India, and had eventually received the money they needed for this pioneering project from subscriptions from 8,000 Indian investors, mostly very small ones, by appealing to their nationalism about the need for industrial progress. The dialectics of British imperial rule has to be fully grasped to see what contributions did eventually emerge from the hostile fields of the empire, mostly after the end of what the historian Ranajit Guha has described as the "autocracy set up and sustained in the East by the foremost democracy in the Western world."

Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian writer, discussed the contrast between Britain's importantly positive contributions to Indian thought and the empire's largely repressive and negative role. Tagore's criticism of imperial rule was consistently vigorous, but he made a special effort to dissociate the criticism of the Raj from any denunciation of the British people, or of their positive influences on Indian culture and society in India. Gandhi's amusing quip in reply to the question, asked in England, about what he thought of British civilization ("it would be a good idea"), could not have come from Tagore, who greatly respected British people and society, including Britain's leading role in democratic thought, enlightened reasoning, and literary and scientific creativity.

In Tagore's powerful indictment of British rule in India in 1941, in a lecture on the occasion of what proved to be his last birthday (published as a pamphlet under the title *Crisis in Civilization*), he maintained that distinction. While he described India as having been "smothered under the dead weight of British administration" (and "another great and ancient civilization for whose recent tragic history the British cannot disclaim responsibility is China"), he also pointed to what India had gained from, for example, "discussions centered upon Shakespeare's drama and Byron's poetry and above all . . . the large-hearted liberalism of nineteenth-century English politics." The tragedy, as Tagore saw it, came from the fact that what "was truly best in their own civilization, the upholding of dignity of human relationship, has no place in the British administration of this country."

It is sometimes argued that, given the coercive nature of capitalism and the demands of the market economy, the British influence in taking India into the global world could not have come in any form other than imperialism. While I do think that unrestrained capitalism has huge shortcomings, I do not believe that the thesis of a necessary and inevitable connection between the market economy and imperialism is correct. Indeed, many of the leading theorists of the market economy at the time of its global emergence firmly rejected this allegedly inescapable connection. I have already quoted Adam Smith's indictment of British rule in India, but he was by no means alone in thinking that global economic connections through exchanges of ideas and commodities need not be parasitic on global imperialism. In fact, the most vocal British advocate of the global market economy, Richard Cobden, the leader of the activist Manchester League, argued explicitly for non-imperial development of market connections by declaring their object to be "to change the face of the world, so as to introduce a system of government entirely distinct from that which now prevails," where "the desire and the motive for large and mighty empires and gigantic armies and great navies . . . will die away . . . when man becomes one family, and freely exchanges the fruits of his labor with his brother man."

The world did not go quite in Cobden's direction. Perhaps it could not have done so. And yet it is important to distinguish between the obvious blessings of greater global interaction and integration, and the penalties of inequity and imperial asymmetry. It is a distinction about which there is need for more clarity not only in India and Britain, but also in America, given its perplexing role as the sole superpower in the contemporary world. ◆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THE AGE OF TURBULENCE: ADVENTURES IN A NEW WORLD
By Alan Greenspan
(Penguin Press, 531 pp., $35)

Alan Greenspan's book—part autobiography, part narrative of his eighteen years as chairman of the Federal Reserve, and part oracular survey of various Big Questions—has been on the *New York Times* best-seller list for many weeks as I write. But it has evoked only minor response, in spite of its author's fame and importance. The substance is complex, Greenspan is not exactly terse, and the prose plods. At least it is not written in Fedspeak, the foggy language behind which the Greenspan Fed used to think it was hiding its tracks, until at the end it opted for more transparency. For those who care seriously about the American economy, about monetary policy and the financial markets, there are nuggets of insight in this book, not all of them intended.

Readers should keep an important fact in mind. Greenspan and his immediate predecessor Paul Volcker were far and away the best chairmen that the Fed has had so far in its history of almost a century. (I leave Ben Bernanke out of this reckoning altogether because it is still so early in his tenure.) Greenspan's finest hour was his and his colleagues' management of the long period of prosperity from 1992 to the recession of 2001, especially the last half of the 1990s. It was an amazing and valuable success. The nature of that success is rather interesting: if I am right, it depended on a side of Greenspan's character that is not often noticed, even by himself.

By 1995, the economy of the United States had reached a degree of prosperity—as measured, for example, by the lowness of the unemployment rate—that most professional economists regarded as dangerously inflationary. This conventional judgment was almost unanimous among conservatives, but it was much more broadly held than that. Those observers naturally thought that it was time, or past time, for the Fed to clamp down and bring the broad economic expansion to a stop. The Greenspan-led Fed did no such thing. Month by month, it let the expansion continue. The United States enjoyed five more years of considerable and unusual prosperity, and produced hundreds of billions of dollars worth of goods and services that would have been dissipated in excess capacity and unemployment if the Fed had done the conventional thing. The price level actually slowed down instead of speeding up.

How did this episode of second sight come about? Greenspan tends to take credit for the intuition that the growth rate of productivity in the American economic machine was in the process of increasing dramatically. In fact, between 1995 and 2000, output per hour worked in the non-farm business sector rose at the rate of 2.5 percent per year, compared with 1.5 percent annually in the preceding five-year period. That may not seem like much of a difference, but in the world of productivity growth it is a big deal. This meant that the national capacity to produce was increasing faster than previously thought, and therefore the economy could safely be allowed to expand further than the conventional rules of thumb would have permitted, without running into an inflation barrier.

But this version of the story—Greenspan's version—is a little too neat. Productivity had indeed accelerated, but other pieces of good luck were also important: the beginnings of managed health care brought cost savings to many businesses; the appreciation of the dollar reduced the dollar prices of imports; and foreign competition tended to stifle both wage increases and the pricing freedom of American firms. Even the productivity spurt was more complicated. Greenspan emphasized the cost savings brought about by the introduction of computers into offices, stores, and factories; but in fact a larger part of the productivity acceleration on a national scale came from spectacular cost reductions in the production of computers, printers, and so on.

I am inclined to give Greenspan greater credit for something deeper and more important than a good guess about the productivity trend. He led his colleagues into an unusual attitude of empirically anchored flexibility. Instead of simply obeying the standard rote instructions—"When the unemployment rate reaches 6.5 percent, raise interest rates!"—Greenspan and the Federal Open Market Committee kept trying to discern which way the wind was actually blowing before leaning against it. Did inflation seem to be picking up? Were there definite signs of overheating? If not, let the economy expand for another month and then check again. It worked, and Greenspan deserves much praise for substituting pragmatism for doctrinal rigidity in the making of monetary policy. Central banks are not often like that. I don't doubt that his thoughts about the productivity trend provided aid and comfort at tense moments, but I think that his real achievement was the willingness to adapt to observation.

It is an interesting sidelight that in his book Greenspan barely mentions any of his colleagues on the Board of Governors. The Fed is notoriously chairman-centered. But among those colleagues at various times were several fine economists, among them Alan Blinder, Ned Gramlich, Alice Rivlin, Janet Yellen, and perhaps others who have slipped my mind. If I had been in Greenspan's shoes, I would have been in and out of their offices all the time, talking about current data and the Fed's options. There is none of that in this book. Maybe everyone was out giving speeches.

The picture that emerges from Greenspan's narrative is that monetary policy is all reading reports and making decisions, decisions, decisions. This is probably inevitable: the active participant is unlikely to see the patterns in his own behavior. But there is a lot that is predictable, and properly predictable, about monetary policy. John Taylor, a highly respected Stanford economist, proposed a formula that is known around the world as the Taylor Rule. It is a reasonable approximation that any central bank has two goals: the first is to keep the rate of inflation near some low target level; the second is to keep the level of aggregate output (as measured by inflation-corrected gross domestic product) near the economy's normal capacity to produce. That is what the central bank would like to do. But all that the central bank actually controls is a short-term interest rate. The Taylor Rule dictates that if the inflation rate is too high, the Fed should aim for a higher interest rate (and vice versa); and if aggregate output is too low, the Fed should aim for a lower interest rate (and vice versa).

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Taylor constructed a simple algebraic formula that combines the inflation gap and the output gap, and tells the central bank what interest rate to aim for. His original construction looked at the inflation gap and the output gap in the recent past, and proposed or predicted a target interest rate. The modern fashion looks instead at some measures of the "expected" inflation gap and output gap in the near future. The modern fashion also gives the central bank a third goal: to avoid sudden drastic changes in interest rates that might upset financial markets. In this form, or even in its original simpler form, the Taylor Rule has been found to approximate pretty well how central banks actually behave. Some of what central banks do could be done by a robot that was fed the appropriate information. The creative part of what central banks do is written in their deviations from the Taylor Rule.

Two economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Yash Mehra and Brian Minton, have recently formulated a Taylor Rule modern-style for the Greenspan years at the Fed. It "predicts" the Fed's actions fairly accurately, which is no surprise: after all, the rule tells the robot to do sensible things. But there are some noticeable deviations, and that is where one should look for the real non-routine imprint. After the stock market crash of 1987, for example, the Fed quite rightly created a lot of liquidity, so that disrupted financial markets would not force fundamentally sound firms into default and bankruptcy. In doing so, it pushed its target interest rate below its Taylor Rule value; the rule does not take this classical central-bank duty into account. Then in 1988, when order had been restored, the Fed withdrew that now-excessive liquidity, and the relevant interest rate was temporarily high. This deviation marks a job well done, and Greenspan generously shares credit with Gerald Corrigan, then the president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, and the man in the trenches.

In 1994–1995, the Fed tightened sharply, and the relevant interest rate rose well above its "predicted" value. The occasion this time was a more innovative piece of monetary policy: a "pre-emptive strike" against an inflation that was not yet visible, and possibly not widely expected. No such inflation materialized, but of course that leaves open the possibility that it would have done so if the Fed had not acted. We know that the real economy faltered slightly in 1995 but then resumed strong growth; and the rate of inflation kept on falling.

In 1997–1999 came Greenspan's finest moment, and it shows in the Mehra–Minton calculations. The output gap was not merely small; on most readings it was negative. Even with an acceptable rate of inflation, the Taylor Rule and conventional best practice would have called for tightened monetary policy and higher short-term interest rates. Instead, as already described, the Fed deviated from routine and picked its way carefully, and the whole country benefited from good years that might have been blah or worse.

The good years ended with the bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2001, and that raises another question. It is often argued that the Federal Reserve ought to include among its goals the stabilization of asset prices, especially the price of equities. (And houses?) On this reading, Greenspan should have tightened earlier, and deflated the bubble whose collapse probably precipitated the recession of 2001. That would have been another deviation from the Taylor Rule, which ignores asset prices. The coiner of the phrase "irrational exuberance" knew that the stock market boom was an accident waiting to happen. He argues briefly but cogently against extending the central bank's turf to asset prices. That would ask the Fed to do something that it cannot possibly do well, and would often conflict with its capacity to pursue the goals already on its agenda.

All this involves a more basic question. There is a general tendency to turn the Fed into an all-purpose economic policy agency, if only because it is competent and reasonably non-political. But remember that monetary policy is supposed to work by maneuvering a short-term interest rate. That single instrument cannot simultaneously perform as a regulator of goods-and-services inflation, the real output gap, and asset inflation. In principle, a single instrument can pursue a single objective. (On the very day that I was writing this, it was announced that the third-quarter real GDP rose by a strong 3.9 percent and the Open Market Committee decided to lower the federal funds rate by a quarter of a percentage point as prophylaxis against the damage that might be done by the continuing slump in housing. God knows what the Taylor Rule is saying. The Fed will be criticized for this decision, and it would have been criticized for the opposite reasons if it had left the funds rate unchanged. Mothers, don't raise your child to be Fed chairman!)

ANTHONY RUSSO

But governments have more than a single objective, even just in the macroeconomic field, and so they need more than a single macroeconomic policy instrument. There is, in principle, another and more versatile instrument, namely fiscal policy—the management of the spending and revenue sides of the large federal budget. The trouble with the agencies that operate fiscal policy is that they are neither competent nor reasonably non-political. This fact creates problems. In a less non-ideal world, monetary and fiscal policy would need to be coordinated; if they are jointly seeking two or three objectives, the division of labor has to be worked out with care and skill. In our system, however, this happens poorly and fitfully if it happens at all, and then it is more personal than institutional. Greenspan was apparently able to work well with Robert Rubin and Lawrence Summers on the Mexican and Russian financial crises during the Clinton years. But his role in the administration of George W. Bush was far from admirable.

To put it briefly, Bush, Cheney, and (after the dissenting Paul O'Neill was forced out) their secretaries of the Treasury were irresponsible about fiscal policy. They pursued an agenda of favor-the-rich tax reduction in season and out. What happened on the spending side of the budget is more complicated, but the result was chronic budget deficits (the adjective is important) and a growing public debt. Cheney famously asserted that deficits do not matter. Greenspan thinks that they do matter, and quite a lot, and also that they create problems for the conduct of monetary policy. He should have been up front in opposing what he now says he thought to be dangerous policy. If the public and Congress heard anything, they heard that he was going along, and certainly not sounding the alarm that he now says he felt. In fact, he was more conspicuous on the administration's side than was seemly in a Fed chairman.

His excuse, as he now tells the story, is that he kept saying in congressional testimony, and in speeches here and there, that the tax reductions should be offset by reductions in federal spending. That was ideological advice at best. More to the point, it was lame advice. It was not going to be heeded, and Greenspan must have

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known this. He was already a sort of oracle: if he had wanted to take a stand, he could have done so. There is no point in telling us of his misgivings now.

At one point Greenspan comments that he cannot tailor his remarks to the interpretations that others will place on them. This does not ring true. As Fed chairman, he was used to having the press hunt for coded meanings in every nuance of every word he uttered, including "and" and "the." He tiptoed through his words with precisely this sensitivity in mind. It is not credible that he was shocked, shocked that he was broadly understood as endorsing the Bush-Cheney fiscal policy. If he had wanted to be counted in opposition to this fiscal irresponsibility, he could easily have arranged it. He could even have said, with much truth, that fiscal policy was none of his business, just as monetary policy was none of Bush's or Cheney's.

So why did Greenspan do it? I think it was mostly ideological conformism. He defines himself more than once as a libertarian Republican, rather like Milton Friedman, whom he describes as never having been on the wrong track. This is surprising, and not merely because a wise person would know that nobody has never been on the wrong track. More specifically, one of Friedman's pet tracks was the belief that monetary policy should obey a simple, totally automatic rule: make the money supply grow at a steady rate of ½ of x percent per month every month, and x percent per year every year. (The fixed rate x is to be determined by the long-run growth rate of the economy and the tolerable rate of inflation, but the details are irrelevant.) But Greenspan's talk and practice have been dedicated to just the opposite.

We have known for a long time that as a young adult, Greenspan was a member of Ayn Rand's circle. When he was sworn in as the chairman of President Ford's Council of Economic Advisers, he invited Rand and his mother to the ceremony. I have more than once had to reassure alarmed friends that there were no Randian traces in Greenspan's monetary policy actions. I would stand by that judgment now. Unlike Greenspan, though, I have never been able to take Rand seriously, as a thinker or as a novelist.

In the second half of Greenspan's memoir, having completed his Washington narrative, he turns to his reflections on broad economic and social issues: economic growth, the capitalist system, China, Russia, globalization, corporate governance, energy, and still more. Then, in the last chapter, he talks about The Future. These pages tell us more about the chairman's ideology.

He is much taken with Joseph Schumpeter's notion of "creative destruction"; it is almost Greenspan's leitmotif. Schumpeter's idea was that the mainspring of economic growth is innovation, the risky introduction into economic life of new goods and services, new methods of production, new organizational principles, new ideas generally. Innovation brings about economic advance, but it also diminishes or destroys the value of assets associated with earlier innovations. Among these doomed assets are factories and equipment, skills, jobs, knowledge, even reputations. Creative destruction is a price we pay for progress. Greenspan embraces this concept with enthusiasm.

The process described by Schumpeter and endorsed by Greenspan pretty clearly benefits "society as a whole" in a meaningful sense. But there are always losers as well as winners. And innocent losers at that: innocent in the sense that they could not possibly have evaluated the odds and adapted to them in advance. (Classic example: the town long supported by a factory that has now become irrecoverably obsolete.) Creative destruction causes what we have learned to call collateral damage. Greenspan exhibits no sympathy at all for losers. This absence of fellow feeling for innocent losers is common among libertarian Republicans; and it strikes me as characteristically Randian.

Does it matter? It would certainly matter less if it were just an attitude. But it is an ideological axiom that affects policy decisions. The practical policy question is whether anything ought to be done by the government to cushion the costs of progress to the losers, at least to the innocent losers. George W. Bush campaigned as a "compassionate conservative." He lied. The argument against doing anything for losers is that the policies actually proposed would often throttle the golden goose by getting in the way of the processes of innovation and creative destruction themselves, thus losing the economic growth from which they are inseparable. Attempts to preserve obsolete jobs are a standard example: if they succeed, they discourage the new thing. This argument is valid as far as it goes, but it does not go very far. Not all social policy has to follow that pattern. There are ways to protect the worker, if not the job. Finding and elaborating such efficient policies would be a worthwhile agenda for economic engineering. One would like to have seen more of that in Greenspan's reflections. I betray my age by remembering Tom Lehrer's words: "Once the rockets are up, who cares where they come down? That's not my department, says Wernher von Braun."

There are traces of this failure of imagination—of moral imagination—in several of the topical chapters that make up the second half of the book. On Latin America, for instance, Greenspan is preoccupied with the dangers of "populism." He appears to give no clear definition of populism; it seems to be, by default, the antonym of capitalism, involving abrogation of the rule of law and individual rights. It is hard not to be against that. But there is no serious analysis of the economic and social conditions that foster populism. How should a capitalist democracy deal with a corrupt elite and a grossly unequal sharing of the benefits of economic growth? Surely that is a real and urgent question.

Presumably Greenspan would say that more, and more open, competition is the ultimate answer, and this is a reasonable thing to say. But the economically entrenched and politically dominant elite will resist. And asking the truly disadvantaged to take the long view is both unrealistic and unjust. The notion that putting any limits at all on inequality and exploitation is destructive of democratic capitalism is simply false. It is contradicted by the history of all successful capitalist countries, including the United States. So there must be better and worse ways for Latin America to evolve. If you would like a picture of how a more populist-inclined capitalism might function, Greenspan is not your man. The question does not seem to interest him.

To take a very different example, Greenspan's discussion of the chronic current-account deficit of the United States is far more subtle than the others. Greenspan argues that the underlying source of imbalance is the gradual attenuation of "home bias" around the world. It has long been observed that countries had a strong tendency to buy domestically produced goods and to invest in domestic industries even when it was economically disadvantageous to do so, even apart from protectionist obstacles to trade and investment. This home bias has been diminishing, partly because trade barriers have been reduced, partly because transportation costs have become less burdensome, partly because information flows more freely, and partly autonomously. This is an important aspect of globalization.

Greenspan makes an interesting case that this development, combined with

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the sustained profitability of real investment in the United States, is the main story behind the current account deficit. He thinks it will probably unwind itself harmlessly. This is a rather benign view. It may underestimate the risk of a disorderly, self-exacerbating run on the dollar if foreign holders should be spooked by fears of a sharp depreciation, for any of several reasons. He would admit this adverse possibility, but he downplays its likelihood. He may be right. He has read the literature, used the work of the Fed's excellent research staff, and weighed the evidence. This issue is part of his regular turf, and it shows. There are other good chapters in this book—on corporate governance, for example—and other perfunctory ones; but the moral to be drawn is finally that you can be a superb chairman of the Federal Reserve without being a significant or universal social thinker. ◆

Joseph Kerman

SOUND AND VISION

THE REST IS NOISE: LISTENING TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
By Alex Ross
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 624 pp., $30)

"I HATE 'CLASSICAL MUSIC,'" cries one of its most influential proponents, Alex Ross, in an autobiographical essay, "Listen to This," lodged appropriately in *The New Yorker* under "Onward and Upward With the Arts":

> not the thing but the name. It traps a tenaciously living art in a theme-park of the past. It cancels out the possibility that music in the spirit of Beethoven could still be created today. It banishes into limbo the works of thousands of composers who have to explain to otherwise well-informed people what it is they do for a living. The phrase is a masterpiece of negative publicity, a tour de force of anti-hype—

and he goes on to decry harshly and at some length the "cult of mediocre élitism" that has given classical music, as against popular, a spurious prestige. Yet Ross tells us that he grew up a "classical nerd" with a special passion for the "Eroica" Symphony—we classical nerds are nothing if not passionate—who insulated himself from popular music until a moment of conversion in college. He fell for punk music of the most cerebral kind, which led to Pere Ubu, Sonic Youth, and on and on. The thrill could not last, though it could never be forgotten. And *that* is important. Most people, he claims,

> are eventually deposited back at the point where they started, and they may begin to hate the music for lying to them. When I went back to the classical ghetto, I chose to accept its limitations. I realized that, despite the decrepitude of the culture, there was still a bright flame within.... I have always wanted to talk about classical music as if it were popular music and popular music as if it were classical.

Add to the new hatred for lying and to the nostalgia—the ambivalence—the fact that "Listen to This" includes a very densely potted history of twentieth-century music, and you have a sketch for *The Rest Is Noise*, Ross's new book, named after the blog that he started around the same time as the article, in 2004, with, I would guess, the book already in mind.

The college is question was Harvard, which, by means of a combination of self-selection and cultivation by stellar professors and deans, regularly brings forth the nation's leaders in all walks of life. The upperclassmen walk with a special little spring, as though to mime a self-assurance that has been mounting since their first days in the yard. It is worth noting that Ross has flaunted tradition by producing as his first book an ambitious history of twentieth-century music, rather than the usual easy collection of already published critical essays, as Bernard Shaw, Andrew Porter, Virgil Thomson (nearly), and others have done. He certainly draws heavily on his *New Yorker* backlog, but he hasn't minded a lot more work and thought.

The problems with this history begin with the title page—with the self-assured title itself, which seems more promotional than informative, and with the subtitle *Listening to the Twentieth Century*, which grows more shifty the more you think about it. It might mean listening to the characteristic sounds of the twentieth century—the roar of the jet, the song of the cell phone, the ear- and brain-splitting din of carpet bombing—rather than listening to music. Twentieth-century music, as Ross has stressed with much vigor, even spleen, is mostly popular, and increasingly international. But a writer whose ambition was "to talk about classical music as if it were popular music and popular music as if it were classical" talks mostly about Western classical music as if it were classical.

LUCKILY, HE WRITES very well about classical music. Ross, who started his career as a music critic in these pages, has been the classical musical critic of *The New Yorker* since 1996. This is as the twinkling of an eye as compared to that magazine's previous long-term critics, Winthrop Sargeant from 1949 to 1972 and Andrew Porter from the early 1970s to 1992. Turning forty, Ross is a product of the Tina Brown *New Yorker*—smart, personal, caustic, irreverent, fabulously informed, and sometimes in your face. He is a natural writer, and although in the reviews section at the back he is allotted much less space than his predecessors were, he sometimes gets long, substantial pieces into the main body of the magazine (such as "Listen to This"). His prose is flashy but invigorating, slipping easily between the conversational and the eloquent. He can be both passionate about music and really funny. The search for the apt epithet seldom fails him: Schoenberg "easily unimpressed," "loosey-goosey" for Milton Babbitt's early music, and for Adorno, polemicizing at ease from the terrace of the "Grand Hotel Abyss" (even if that is quoted from Lukács).

Ross reads recent musical writings avidly, both arcane and casual, and peppers his prose with apposite quotations. They provide an air of authority as well as generosity to his sources, but they do get tiresome in extended writings, such as this book. Ross is always on the watch for hypocrisy, but his deflationary notes and anecdotes can come to feel routine, even mean. That he never shies away from technical language gives him cred (as he might say) with his musician readers and bothers not at all the non-musicians, who seem happy to skim over the C-sharps and the minor triads rooted a tritone apart, knowing these will always lead to something interesting and even breathtaking.

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For Ross is one of very few music critics who somehow create the illusion that you grasp the music they write about even if you have not heard it. This a rare gift. Many esteemed critics do not even aim for it. And that is why his blog has found its way onto many a music lover's slate of Favorites. "Ross enables us to listen more hearingly," writes a reviewer who prides himself on his amateur, not-music-savvy status. (Or "hear more listeningly"?) It helps that Ross typically writes about music that inspires his enthusiasm, and therefore can inspire the same in his readers, many of whom associate him especially with contemporary—including the very newest—music. But he makes new points about older music, too. Unlike many critics, he does not enjoy trashing art, and in a rather moving *New Yorker* piece in which Ross in effect dumps Philip Glass, he gives him the gentlest parachute imaginable. It also helps that his reviews are quite short (as opposed to Andrew Porter, who did his best work on a more expansive level).

Unfortunately, the transition from reviewer to historian is never easy. Even the most self-assured writer of art history—the history of any of the arts—has to confront another ambivalence, this one not personal but inherent to the enterprise. Music history has been a laggard, insular subject that came very late to New Criticism, Marxism (by way of Adorno), feminism, postmodern theory, and the like. The traditional paradigm was Whiggish or Hegelian—music's internal technical "progress" from plainchant to polyphony, Beethoven to Schoenberg and (one could think, for a time) beyond. For many reasons, some of them obvious enough, this paradigm stopped working, and music, like painting and poetry, is now increasingly viewed, studied, and experienced as a product of ideology, social conditions, and politics. But to believe this in a strong sense is immediately to call into question the primacy of the aesthetic meanings of music versus the social ones. Given his own history as a listener, it is no surprise that Ross sometimes comes down strongly on the social and political side of this impasse and at other times tacitly on the aesthetic.

The best parts of Ross's book are a series of loosely connected episodes—set pieces, really, some of which made their debuts in *The New Yorker*. There are whole chapters on Sibelius and Britten and long sections on Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Copland, and Messiaen. We could count in this category the book's prelude on the premiere of *Salome* in Graz in 1906, with which Ross begins his twentieth century. This is a little tour de force. The composer-conductor, dining at leisure before the performance, reassures his anxious companion—who happens to be Mahler—that they cannot start without him, Richard Strauss: "Let 'em wait." Crowned heads and everyone from Vienna is here, for the famously conservative Court Opera in Vienna had refused to mount *Salome* because of the immorality of its text *and* of its music. Schoenberg, six of his students, the widow of Johann Strauss II the Waltz King, the fictional but inevitable Adrian Leverkühn, probably Hitler, unquestionably Puccini—each is sketched as deftly as though by a Viennese Max Beerbohm. Strauss exerts an unholy fascination on Ross, and keeps turning up in the book to sardonic effect. He was the obnoxious genius who twisted his way cynically through the shoals of the century without noticeable principles, let alone good taste, though he wrote some of its most beautiful music.

Richard Strauss (second from left) and Gustav Mahler (third from left) at the premiere of *Salome* in Graz, 1906

COURTESY THE KAPLAN FOUNDATION

It is the connective tissue between the set pieces that betrays a hasty and uncertain sense of narrative, with questionable emphases. Perhaps this was inevitable. Puccini, for one, receives lamentably little attention beyond a hasty page on his not-all-that-important trip to America in 1907 ("his ship was trapped for a day in a fog bank off Sandy Hook"), when he conceived of *The Girl of the Golden West* as an appeal to his hosts. It features a fearless, independent heroine, "a bringer of peace, a beacon in a darkening world," but as the twentieth century has listened, women quite different from Minnie have kept Puccini on the stage (even on Broadway) and in big tents, stadiums, and multiplex simulcasts.

Many will see the second section of Ross's book as the most impressive of his grand set pieces. "Part II: 1933–1945" covers this twelve-year period in three chapters: "The Art of Fear: Music in Stalin's Russia"; "Music for All: Music in FDR's America"; and "Death Fugue: Music in Hitler's Germany." France and Italy are not covered. In "The Art of Fear," some pretty familiar material on Shostakovich and Prokofiev is presented arrestingly, with a good deal of nuance, new at least to me. Ross keeps a studiously open mind on Shostakovich's putative intentions. "Music for All" is less arresting or focused, though Aaron Copland is its main victim; his stubborn adherence to Popular Front ideas is exposed at length. Fascistic voices are also heard.

"Death Fugue" is the most chilling and luminously written of these chapters. The tortuous vacillations and accommodations of Werner Egk, Carl Orff, Webern, Hindemith, and even the Schoenberg circle are spelled out. (Webern became a Nazi devotee.) But what stands out is the picture of Hitler's obsession with—and love for—music. It is fairly well known that the director of the Wagner shrine at Bayreuth welcomed him into the family: he was "Uncle Wolf" to her boys, putty in the hands of her resident ideologue Houston Stewart Chamberlain. But it was the respite of music,

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as much as ideology, that brought Hitler back to his Bayreuth villa. A serious music lover who liked to play records to his friends followed by little music-appreciation lectures, he admired Bruckner but not Pfitzner, barely tolerated Orff, and kept *Parsifal* and *Götterdämmerung* on the stage against the entreaties of his advisers. His youthful epiphany was a performance of *Tristan* in Vienna conducted by—Mahler. Over the years Hitler and Strauss played a crazy game of cat and mouse, as the latter eased into his last golden years as a composer.

Hardly by accident, there is just one of Ross's musical descriptions in this chapter, near the end, on *Metamorphosen*, the last big orchestral work by the eighty-one-year-old Strauss.

> Contrapuntal lines intertwine like kudzu on a ruined mansion. As the movement unfolds, the music tries to settle into a more relaxed, lyrical voice, but at regular intervals a kind of drainage occurs and a *Tristan* mood of wounded desperation resumes. At a dramatic moment toward the end, most of the instruments drop out, leaving a sibilant G .... It gravitates implacably to the deathly C minor that has been sounding throughout.

Metamorphosen then cites a work highly resonant for Ross, the "Eroica" Symphony, causing

> anguished dissonances as Strauss's own funeral anthem falls out of sync with Beethoven's. Having seemingly reached bottom, it goes two more long steps down—a low G, then an even lower C. It is like the sunrise fanfare in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* moving in retrograde, the harmonic series rewinding to the fundamental. There is no "light in the night," only night.

I'm hearing the critic I wait for week by week, not the self-assured historian.

And "Part III: 1945–2000"? It starts strongly, with an account of the stimulation of German music by the American Occupying Forces, which also propped up the Nazi-Wagnerian old guard at Bayreuth—a brief "American interregnum in Germany musical history," as Ross nicely puts it. Strauss has finally died. But then the typical rush sets in, sometimes brilliant, sometimes merely dazzling. Skipping ahead to the final chapter, on music at the century's end, Ross ruminates on the future of classical music, pronounces the new bewilderingly diverse, and runs through the latest names under miscellaneous headings such as "After the End," "After Minimalism," and "After Europe." He returns home to John Adams, for whom he has always been a strong advocate. Yet in the elegiac tribute to Adams that ends the book, Ross cites not the relatively recent *Doctor Atomic* or *On the Transmigration of Souls* or even *El Niño* of 2000, his cut-off year, but *Nixon in China*, written as far back as 1987.

It remains to say that there is, in Ross's book, a strong strain of sympathy for and solidarity with the well-known oppressed groups in our society—blacks, gays, and (less) Jews and women. A long section on the exclusion of African Americans from classical music alternates between real fury at their exclusion and a certain *schadenfreude* at their establishment of music(s) of their own that bids fair to supplant it. Ross takes the opportunity of his somewhat peculiar Britten chapter—among other things, I think he overemphasizes homosexual elements in the composer's life and art—to issue a thorough list of gay composers of the twentieth century; in this connection, his set piece on the Strauss-Wilde *Salome* may or may not have been serendipitous. Ross suggests that some of the aversion to classical music since the 1920s, at least, stems from the feeling that it is not essentially masculine. Exactly as Charles Ives believed. ◆

Alexander Nemser
THE WORLD WRITING

WAR AND PEACE
By Leo Tolstoy
Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky
(Alfred A. Knopf, 1,296 pp., $37)

WAR AND PEACE: ORIGINAL VERSION
By Leo Tolstoy
Translated by Andrew Bromfield
(Ecco, 885 pp., $34.95)

I.

In *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway recalled sitting at the Café Lilas with the poet Evan Shipman and discussing the Constance Garnett translation of *War and Peace*. "They say it can be improved on.... I'm sure it can although I don't know Russian," Shipman said. "But we both know translations. But it comes out as a hell of a novel, the greatest I suppose, and you can read it over and over." Shipman was right, and most people who have read the novel in English would have agreed with him: despite the flaws in the translation, which may be numerous, *War and Peace* comes out as one of the great novels in any language.

Reading certain books in translation brings to mind Dante's encounter with Adam, the first man and the originator of language, who, enveloped in light, appeared like an animal moving inside a sack: you get a sense that something is trying to break out, something amazing, but it is all so muffled and tangled that it is impossible to make out what. In the case of *War and Peace*, the cat has always been out of the bag: Tolstoy's immense story of Napoleon's invasion of Russia has never awaited the final, saving translation that would at last reveal its previously inaccessible and infinite-hearted humanity. It was one of the greatest books from the start.

The new English version by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky is wonderful, a milestone of translation—but it should be taken more like a newly restored 35mm print of a film, with brighter colors and sharper sound. The sights and sounds are meant to be spectacular in this version: the rustle of a white gauze dress during a waltz, the unnatural thud of a cannonball digging into the ground at Borodino, a troika race through the midnight snow at Christmas, the scar left on a soldier's face by a Turkish bayonet.

The novel is famously, almost impossibly, enormous. It feels like a cosmos unto itself, a complete ecosystem. The book is an entire library: within this volume is a dictionary of received Russian ideas of the nineteenth century, a study in psychosomatics (particularly as manifested in the human face), a pamphlet on historiography (with a supplemental treatise on the philosophy of history), an encyclopedia of Russian military regalia, and several albums of pictures, most

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notably showing the Russian landscape in all the seasons, and a series of portraits of the Russian aristocracy frontally and in profile.

The action of *War and Peace* (action in this instance meaning almost the entirety of human life) centers on the fates of two families loosely based on Tolstoy's own ancestors—the impractical, soulful Rostovs, associated with Moscow, and the dignified, elegant Bolkonskys, associated with St. Petersburg (and both families with the countryside)—and depicts something like the transition from the generation of Tolstoy's grandparents to that of his parents, who are children at the start of the novel and adults in the midst of family life at its end. Borne on by the grand currents of the Napoleonic wars, the protagonists witness the Russian defeat at Austerlitz, the victory at Borodino, and the burning of Moscow; they catch glimpses of the adored Aleksandr I and of the reviled and admired Napoleon. At the same time they pursue ill-fated and later beautiful love affairs, lose money, dream of the future, act and react without thinking, and face death. They live in history but not by it, laughing off its minor catastrophes and trying to evade its major ones.

Unsatisfied by the distant accounts of historians and the imperfect reminiscences of individuals, Tolstoy chose to write the story of his origins himself, and *War and Peace* is in a sense a reconstruction of his family's world before his arrival in it. His grandfathers Ilya Andreivich Tolstoy and Nikolai Andreivich Volkonsky, whose portraits hung on the wall of his study, lent their features and qualities to Count Rostov (the lax charm, the generosity with money) and the elder Prince Bolkonsky (the severity, the discipline); and the figures of Nikolai Rostov and Princess Marya are based on the writer's own parents. The two remaining male protagonists, Prince Andrei and Pierre Bezukhov, appear to have been modeled on a single historical personage, but of a later generation: Leo Tolstoy himself.

Tolstoy narrates a story to two of his grandchildren

COURTESY DOUBLEDAY

According to his own account, Tolstoy "spent five years of ceaseless and exclusive labor, under the best conditions of life" writing *War and Peace*, from about 1863 to 1869, when the book was published in its entirety in six volumes. In September 1862, when he was thirty-four, Tolstoy had married the eighteen-year-old Sonya Behrs. She was the second of the three daughters of Lyubov Behrs, a childhood sweetheart of the writer, whom he had once pushed over a balcony in a jealous fit. By the time of their courtship, Tolstoy was already a literary celebrity, having published his autobiographical trilogy *Childhood, Boyhood*, and *Youth*, as well as his *Sevastopol Sketches*, based on his experiences during the campaign against the French in the Crimea, which appeared in the prestigious journal *The Contemporary*, founded by Pushkin. The young Sonya, who remembered meeting Tolstoy in his military uniform at the age of ten, knew entire passages from his books by heart and had copied out several lines from *Childhood*, which she hid as a charm under the waistband of her skirt.

Much of Natasha Rostov was perhaps modeled on Tanya Behrs, Sonya's youngest sister: her ability to dance in the Russian style, as Natasha does at Uncle's house in the forest; her singing voice; her dazzled reactions to a ball (Leo accompanied her to one). During one of her visits with the Tolstoys when Leo was writing *War and Peace*, Tanya suggested that her presence had become a nuisance, to which the writer reportedly replied: "Surely you don't suppose you are not paying for your keep? Why, you are posing for your portrait, my dear."

Before his marriage, Tolstoy had lived an alternately wild and secluded life, swinging between fits of physical desire and impassioned attempts at self-control. Night after night he went out carousing with gypsies and—like Pierre early in *War and Peace*, in the company of the troublemakers Anatol Kuragin and Dolokhov—making trips to "***," the unnameable three-star establishment of nineteenth-century Russian prose. Following one of these visits, Tolstoy wrote in his diary: "Girls, silly music, girls, mechanical nightingale, girls, heat, cigarette smoke, girls, vodka, cheese, screams and shouts, girls, girls, girls!" After a series of evenings like this one, he would return to his estate and castigate himself, and plan countless projects for self-improvement—music composition, gymnastics, a school for peasant children, religious devotion, literature.

Tolstoy's decision to travel with his brother Nicholas to the Caucasus, his first experience of military life, was in part an attempt to avoid the temptations of the city, particularly the thrill of gambling. He was a compulsive gambler, frequently signing promissory notes for his losses and writing in desperation to his brothers for assistance. At one point, fearing he would not have the money to pay off his debts, he was forced to dismantle and sell the central building of his ancestral home, which was reassembled twelve miles away and later completely demolished for firewood. He experienced firsthand the panicked sensation felt by Nikolai Rostov, during the game with Dolokhov, at the sudden and inexplicable loss of money he did not have.

After they were married, Tolstoy and Sonya settled into family life on his estate at Yasnaya Polyana (the model for Otradnoe, the Rostov estate, in the novel), where Tolstoy had spent the first years of his life, and which he had inherited at the age of nineteen when the family property was divided between the five Tolstoy children, four brothers and

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a sister. Thanks to his marriage, Tolstoy experienced a dream of family life of a kind that he had never known as a child. He was only twenty-three months old when his mother died, and only nine at the death of his father, and by the time he began *War and Peace* he had lived through the death of his paternal grandmother, who cared for him after his parents, and of two of his brothers. Settled peacefully at home with Sonya, Tolstoy was able to work without interruptions for the first time in his life. This was in no small part owed to Sonya's abilities at managing the estate, running back and forth with a giant ring of keys, overseeing all the tasks, keeping distractions away from her husband.

As early as 1856, Tolstoy had begun to contemplate a novel that would depict the return from Siberian exile of one of the Decembrists, a group of young idealistic noblemen, mostly army officers, who, having pursued Napoleon back to Paris after the campaign of 1812, returned to Russia to find its social inequality, and especially its institution of serfdom, unworthy in their eyes of the country's newly won military glory. The movement came to a head in 1825, on the eve of Czar Nicholas I's coronation, when its members revolted on the Palace Square in St. Petersburg. The revolt was suppressed, its leaders were hanged, and the remaining participants were sent into exile. Tolstoy originally planned a trilogy composed of three stand-alone but related novels: the first set in 1812, the year of the decisive Russian defeat of Napoleon; the second in 1825, the year of the Decembrist revolt; and the last in 1856, the year of the exile's return after the pardon announced by the new czar, Alexander II.

Vestiges of Tolstoy's original plan for the trilogy can be seen in *War and Peace* in Pierre's philosophical argument with Nikolai at the end of the novel, in which he employs what would have been recognized as Decembrist rhetoric. The reader's recognition of the political disaster awaiting Pierre, and most likely Prince Andrei's son Nikolenka, lends *War and Peace* a sense of dramatic irony somewhat like that of *The Republic*, in which the discussion is electrified by the reader's awareness that not long afterward Socrates will be imprisoned and executed.

After writing the first few chapters of the final volume, set in 1856, Tolstoy put the book aside and began to contemplate the earlier history of his character. He then jumped back in time, first to 1825, then to 1812, then to 1805—finding, like one of his hated historians, that the events were comprehensible only when they were related to what came before. But he could not go back indefinitely: in fixing upon this period, Tolstoy selected an age to which he was, through his parents and his grandparents, connected. Later, after completing *War and Peace*, he tried to write another historical novel, about the period of Peter the Great, but found himself unable to penetrate the heads of his protagonists, settling in the end on the theme of contemporary married life, out of which *Anna Karenina* took shape.

The decision to set the novel fifty years before the present also defied the literary fashion of the time, championed by Turgenev and Nekrasov, the editor of *The Contemporary*, which sought to fashion literature into a medium of social change addressing the injustices of its own day. By 1861, the serfs had been liberated by the decree of Alexander I, marking the end of an aristocratic lifestyle that had lasted for more than a century, and so Tolstoy's depiction in 1869 of the relationship between landowner and serf, particularly in the account of Nikolai Rostov at the end of the novel, was self-consciously anachronistic. For readers in our own time, the social world of *War and Peace* sometimes seems, especially in the terrible context of the revolutionary twentieth century, irreversibly remote, a distant pastoral dream of a life long ago lost; but it is worth remembering that even for Tolstoy the world portrayed in his novel was already gone, and almost mythical. In this sense, both the writing of this book and his life at Yasnaya Polyana were efforts to persist in a tradition that was showing clear and insistent signs of obsolescence.

Between 1863 and 1866, Tolstoy wrote and published the first few chapters in *The Russian Herald*, under the title "The Year 1805." Along the way the vast scope of the final version began to take shape, and Tolstoy's colossal ambition for the work is evident in an entry in his diary on September 30, 1865, written while composing the novel (Braddon is the English novelist Mrs. Braddon, and *The Hunting Ground* is an early work by Tolstoy):

> A novelist's poetry is contained (1) in the interest of the combination of events—Braddon, my *Cossacks*, my future work; (2) in the picture of manners and customs based on a historical event—*The Odyssey, The Iliad, 1805*;

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(3) in the beauty and cheerfulness of the situations—*Pickwick, The Hunting Ground*, and (4) in the characters of the people—*Hamlet*, my future works. . . .

After the publication of the first several sections, Tolstoy continued his work on the novel, drafting the final chapters and planning at first to serialize the entire book. In a letter to the poet Afanasy Fet, Tolstoy wrote that he hoped to complete the whole book by 1867 (he actually finished two years later) and that the final version would be titled *All's Well That End's Well*. On Sonya's advice, Tolstoy decided not to serialize the final chapters, and so these sections did not appear until the complete book was published in 1869. For three years, Tolstoy wrote the last chapters of the final version of the novel and substantially revised the earlier chapters, most notably altering the plot to include the deaths of two of the central characters and adding the numerous discourses on the philosophy of history.

War and Peace: Original Version is a translation of what is purportedly Tolstoy's first complete draft, beginning with the sections published in the *Russian Herald*, before the three-year period of revisions. In the 1980s the Russian scholar Evelina Zaidenshnur reconstructed the later chapters of this "original" draft from Tolstoy's notoriously indecipherable drafts, and published the version in an academic journal, including the variations on single lines and an elaborate apparatus of explanatory notes. In 2000, Igor Zakharov, an ex-philologist turned publisher, pruned the scholarly version of its notes and its variations, and "massaged" the text with elements of several different existing versions of the book, and published it as Tolstoy's original manuscript, purportedly unknown for decades: "half as long and twice as interesting," and without any of the intrusive philosophical meditations or incomprehensible French. The book was harshly criticized in the Russian press for its misleading presentation and its editorial methods. Upon hearing that his version would be translated into English, Zakharov reportedly declared that he "felt like Napoleon."

Although the "original version" is a far cry from the final version of the novel, Andrew Bromfield's translation is extremely good and has many beautiful moments, particularly in the descriptions of landscape. But the circumstances and the presentation of the book in its American incarnation are dubious. For a start, there are the three quotations on the back jacket from Woolf, Flaubert, and Mann, praising Tolstoy. But not one of them ever read the so-called original version, because Tolstoy never published it. Turgenev, on the other hand, who did read the first sections in the *Russian Herald*, called the book "positively bad, boring, and unsuccessful"; it was only later, after the publication of the complete novel, that he judged Tolstoy to be the greatest writer in Russia. The introduction to the "original version," by Bromfield and Jenefer Coates (who edited the volume), provides no clear account of how the book came into being, hinting only vaguely at the backstory of the Russian edition, and presenting itself more like a newly discovered director's cut than a scholarly supplement to a different and more significant text.

A family drama of love and renunciation interspersed with several impressive military set pieces, Tolstoy's first draft ends after the battle of Borodino, rather like a problem play, with a double wedding at the Rostovs' estate attended by, among others, Prince Andrei and Petya Rostov. At the end of the final version, however, neither character has survived the battle. The writer's decision to depict their deaths was, along with the addition of numerous digressions on the philosophy of history, the central development of Tolstoy's three-year period of revisions, and enabled the transition to the sprawling meditation on happiness and causality in the final version of the novel.

Episodes and characters from the final version flash by in a few lines in the early draft, appearing suddenly and then dissolving into the crowd. In the old soldier who, marched to his execution outside of Moscow, remarks that "it's all the same in the end," we glimpse the beginnings of Platon Karataev, the peasant soldier who re-ignites Pierre's soul during his imprisonment by the French. Many of the elaborations seem to grow out of the increasing complexity of Tolstoy's philosophical positions. The transformation of Kutuzov into the massive, cautious, bear-like representative of the Russian military soul; the disquisition on the fluidity of partisan warfare; the pragmatic Platon Karataev—each echoes Tolstoy's growing sense of the inability to know anything fully, the impossibility of making reliable predictions or identifying true causes.

ANTHONY RUSSO

II.

In an early scene depicting a strangely calm moment between the two overwhelming situations of war and peace, Prince Andrei Bolkonsky, having reported to Prince Bagration just before the battle of Schongraben, passes a camp in which a sergeant is pouring vodka into the soldiers' canteen caps:

> The soldiers, with pious faces, brought the caps to their mouths, upended them, and, rinsing their mouths and wiping them on their greatcoat sleeves, walked away from the sergeant major with cheered faces. All the faces were as calm as though everything was happening not in view of the enemy, prior to an action in which at least half the division would be left on the field, but somewhere in their home country, in expectation of a peaceful stay.

Less than half a page later, Prince Andrei witnesses a man being whipped "crying out unnaturally" and sees

> a young officer, with an expression of perplexity and suffering on his face, walk[ing] away from the punished man, looking questioningly at the passing adjutant.

Finally, he rides along the frontline:

> Our line and the enemy's stood far from each other on the left and right flanks, but in the center, where the envoys had passed that morning, the lines came so close that the men could see each other's faces and talk to each other.

Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation is the only one in which the word "face" is used to denote all the visages in this sequence, all five times, exactly as in the Russian text. Their version is especially admirable for its attention to such a feature of Tolstoy's style. The example may seem prosaic, but in fact it demonstrates a regular method of Tolstoy's novelistic composition. Such repetition heightens the effects of Tolstoy's battle scenes: conditions of hunger or unease over uncertain terrain, tides of morale and enthusiasm, and experiences of danger are all depicted by means of expressions on the faces of individuals. Soldiers are frequently sketched in this way—registered

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almost like an assemblage of colored diodes, which light up in different hues depending on their state: terror, triumph, piety, confusion, fervor.

In a typical reversal of the senses, Tolstoy describes Rostov's attempt to cross the field during the battle of Austerlitz: "Having drawn even with the infantry guards, he noticed that cannonballs were flying over and around them, not so much because he heard the sound of the cannon, but because he saw the uneasiness on the soldiers' faces, and on the officers' an unnatural military solemnity." This sort of observation, obliquely empirical and not reported directly by the senses, jars the reader into a fresh recollection of the humanity of the soldiers. For Tolstoy, humanity is contagious, and it is most readily transmitted through the face. At the end of the scene with Prince Andrei, laughter erupts when one of the Russians, considered an expert in French, speaks a few garbled phrases. With the soldiers close enough to see one another's faces, ironically at the very point of greatest tension, the battle seems ridiculous: "Peals of such healthy and merry guffawing came from among the soldiers that it crossed the line and involuntarily infected the French, after which it seemed they ought quickly to unload their guns, blow up their munitions, and all quickly go back home."

In their introduction to *War and Peace: Original Version*, Bromfield and Coates announce their decision to vary Tolstoy's repetitions "in the name of stylistic euphony," explaining that while the "hammering" effect works in Russian, English "abhors repetition of this kind." This seems to have been the view of many translators of the novel, and Pevear is right to note his predecessors' tendency in his own introduction. But such "euphony" is in fact a misrepresentation of Tolstoy's style. Tolstoy's device of repeating one word many times in a single passage, or repeatedly employing an entire phrase word for word, is striking and jarring in the original Russian. The effect is deliberate: it is not that Tolstoy could not think of another word, but that he wanted us to be unable to think of another one.

Tolstoy's contemporaries criticized him for the repetitions, and implored him to clean up and harmonize his sentences. The writer Konstantin Leontiev suggested that Tolstoy "throw out of [*War and Peace*]" all the repetitions: "strange, strange, hands, hands, hastily, hastily, sob, sob, rich lip, rich lip." The repetitions in the novel's philosophical sections, as the Russian formalist Boris Eikhenbaum pointed out, play a role similar to the repetitive digressions that mark new chapters of the *Iliad*, reinforcing the novel's epic quality. Tolstoy's repetitions have the ironic effect of linking him to both the highest and the lowest forms of literary language—to the Homeric and the homely. The repetitions additionally imbue the novel with a sense of what it may have been like to listen to Tolstoy speak, as in Gorky's observation that "one must have heard him speak in order to understand the extraordinary, indefinable beauty of his speech; it was, in a sense, incorrect, abounding in repetitions of the same word, saturated with village simplicity."

Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov, 1901

COURTESY DOUBLEDAY

Repetition is also a means of defamiliarization, the technique by which objects and situations are "made strange" and depicted with an unusual clarity, quite contrary to the way we habitually see (and thus do not genuinely see) them. "The very fact of repeating an item, repeating a word takes it out of line already and renders it strange," observed Viktor Shklovsky, the great Russian formalist critic who pioneered the concept of "estrangement" as an essential technique of literature, and who acknowledged Tolstoy as one of the masters of the device. *War and Peace* contains scene after scene in which the descriptions seem first counterintuitive and then revelatory: Natasha's trip to the opera, where the stage is shown as "painted pieces of cardboard on the sides representing trees, and canvas stretched over the boards at the back"; Pierre, dazed and intrigued, wandering through the crucial battle of Borodino in a white hat and green tailcoat, looking for the battle; Nikolai's fixation on Dolokhov's "broad-boned, reddish hands, with hair showing from under the cuffs," which appear to grow so large and monstrous that they completely dominate his impressions. Senses are shifted or apparently misattributed. War is rendered with images of peace, peace with images of war. Laughter erupts in moments of solemnity. Bullets whiz by "merrily." Prince Andrei waits outside the room where his son is being born and, hearing the baby crying, thinks to himself, "Why did they bring a baby there?" Again and again the world is seen, very suddenly, with the startling and unclouded truthfulness of Tolstoy's alien but earthly eye.

Much of *War and Peace* is devoted to clearing away received ideas—the legacy of Napoleon, the excuse of war for moral atrocities, the elevating quality of Western ideals; and Tolstoy's style is designed to reduce a complex of sentiments rife with preconceptions to a powerful, moving, and finally rather raw feeling. This broaches another virtue of the Pevear-Volokhonsky translation: the decision to keep all the French in Tolstoy's text. In Russian upper-class circles, especially in the early nineteenth century, French was entrenched as the language of culture and sophistication, following Catherine the Great's program of Westernization. Pushkin wrote his first poems in French, and an aristocrat would have been expected to be able to converse freely in the language. (Tolstoy's children were instructed to speak French at the dinner table.)

In *War and Peace*, French—the language in which, as Tolstoy observes, "our grandparents not only spoke but thought"—seems alternately like the

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Trojan Horse and the perfect symbol of liberalization and progress, a repository of both culture and illusion. The emblematic depiction of the unnatural influence of French comes when Pierre Bezukhov, feeling himself "occupying someone else's place," declares his bewildered, engineered love for the duplicitous Helene Kuragin of St. Petersburg. With the words "*Je vous aime*," he binds himself to a vast network of social falsehoods, and then spends most of the novel trying to extricate himself from them. The use of French also makes a significant socio-linguistic point, by marking the gap between the classes: as Napoleon's army advances on Moscow, the noble elite in Petersburg start to take private Russian lessons and charge each other forfeits for every French word spoken, and it becomes dangerous for the upper classes to greet each other in the street in Moscow, as they might be mistaken by the crowd for French spies. The supreme embodiment of French and all that it suggests is, of course, Napoleon himself, who is characterized by "the absence of the best and highest human qualities—love, poetry, tenderness, a searching philosophical doubt." Self-serving, scornful of tradition, amoral, blinkered by ambition, Napoleon represents in Tolstoy's novel a moral and spiritual challenge to the novel's heroes—and, in a typical, ahistorical Tolstoyan put-down, the invading emperor speaks a bizarre mix of French and Russian.

Tolstoy's temperament evidently bristled at the existence of great men other than himself. He gradually quarreled with much of the Russian artistic world, nearly fought a duel with Turgenev over a minor disagreement, and flabbergasted Tchaikovsky by dismissing Beethoven as a minor artist. Years after *War and Peace*, Tolstoy wrote an article attempting even to annihilate the literary reputation of Shakespeare. When he was advanced in years, Tolstoy was held by many Russians to be one of Russia's "two czars," the first being the crowned sovereign Alexander II. And he was too large even for the infinite: as Gorky wrote in his memoir of Tolstoy, "With God he has very suspicious relations; they sometimes remind me of the relation of 'two bears in one den.'"

War and Peace is in part a demolition of the very idea of the "great man." History is so overwhelming, according to Tolstoy, because momentous events are the result of many factors—of so many factors that no single animating force behind them can ever be identified. The leviathan of history has causes for scales, and no one can count them all. The individual is inevitably swept up by a tide of causes beyond his or her abilities to comprehend, let alone to influence. And no single human being could possibly be the cause of something as vast as the Napoleonic campaigns, including Napoleon himself. In one sense, the deepest drama of *War and Peace* lies in the meeting between the self-contained universe of a single individual and the senseless and immense tide of historical events. This meeting, meaningless for history, leaves the individual shivering. As Mary McCarthy observed, "It could be said that the real plot of *War and Peace* is the struggle of the characters not to be immersed, engulfed, swallowed up by the landscape of fact and 'history' in which they, like all human beings, have been placed: freedom (the subjective) is in the fiction, and necessity is in the fact."

The purest evocation of an individual come face to face with history is in the battle of Schongraben, when Nikolai Rostov sees the French army advancing and thinks: "Who are they? Why are they running? Can it be they're running to me? Can it be? And why? To kill me? *Me*, whom everybody loves so?" Tolstoy's development of the problem of historical causation, in the later philosophical interludes produced during the three-year period of revision, could even be seen as an attempt at the novel's end to find answers for the questions that Nikolai asked at its beginning. But he did not find these answers; and there is a chilling and momentous echo of Rostov's baffled voice, many decades later, in Solzhenitsyn, who at the start of *The Gulag Archipelago* describes a man's incomprehension about his arrest by the secret police: "The darkened mind is incapable of embracing these displacements in our universe, and both the most sophisticated and the veriest simpleton among us, drawing on all life's experience can gasp out only: 'Me? What for?'"

Yet the insignificance of the human, cosmically considered, is not all of the novel's wisdom. Alongside the book's illustrations of the blinkered perspectives of its people, *War and Peace* revels in the depiction of individual experience, internally coherent and inexhaustible, in the face of that same tide of history. The interior worlds of love and its dreams, of hunger, disappointment, spiritual unity, and the fear of death: Tolstoy reveals all of this, and the immediate impressions of his characters, however self-contained, often expand in significance to fill completely their perceptions. If there is a skeptical and abstract strain to Tolstoy's picture of human life in the novel, there is also a personal and ecstatic one. Each character stands at the center of his or her own universe, and much of the life-like quality of Tolstoy's narrative stems from its sensitivity to the force of local sensations and desires. Amid the terrifying chaos of battle, a military doctor comes out of a tent carrying in his bloody hand a cigar "between the thumb and the little finger (so as not to stain it)."

And more, every personal universe appears limitless. In the famous scene on the battlefield of Austerlitz, the wounded Prince Andrei experiences his sweeping, almost mystical vision of the "infinite sky" all around him, and then sees Napoleon, the quintessential great man, and finds him inconsequential: "He knew that it was Napoleon—his hero—but at that moment, Napoleon seemed to him such a small, insignificant man compared with what was now happening between his soul and this lofty, infinite sky with clouds racing across it." Napoleon cannot conceive of a world of which he is not the center, but neither can anyone else: Pierre, Nikolai, Natasha, and Princess Marya each experience moments of transcendence, visions of the world in its totality, encompassed by the individual soul and encompassing it. These moments are rarely shared between the characters themselves, and Tolstoy shows us not only how his characters glimpse the infinite, but also the relativity of their universal glimpses: where one sees infinity, another sees just the sky.

III.

Dostoyevsky, Gorky, and many others have referred to Tolstoy as a godlike author. If his message is in fact divine, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* might be compared with God's final words to his prophet Jonah, who desired to see the city of Nineveh destroyed for sinfulness, but fell into a rage at the destruction of a gourd that gave him shade: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in the night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle." *War and Peace* can be read as a similar meditation on scale. If one man can ascend to the heavens of experience, and love, and err, and repent, and glimpse for a second the meaning of his own life,

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imagine the spiritual attainments of entire families, cities, and nations! Again the philosophical problems of complexity and causation seem to arise out of the local character of the narrative—out of its local infinities—as though Tolstoy in his philosophical chapters was coming at the same questions raised by the story in a different way. Of what is life composed, and toward what should it be directed when set against the world's immensity? Out of these perplexities arises not only Tolstoy's philosophy, but also his fiction.

In his introduction, Pevear paraphrases Isaac Babel as saying that "if the world could write, it would write like Tolstoy." In fact, Babel actually said that "When you read Tolstoy, it is the world writing, the variety of the world." The life that Tolstoy portrays is forever a teeming multiplicity, and his secret is to imply even more life than that. Since the spiritual heights experienced by the main characters are so vivid, and since these characters are decidedly not great historical actors, the reader ends up believing that after the hussar mentioned in only a single sentence has ridden out of view, behind the tree line, he may go on to get rich, or to fall in love, or to see God—but no matter what, his life will continue. The passing, anonymous hussar's life beyond his appearance in this book could even be the subject of another book. It is one of the feats of Tolstoy's art that it makes mortal lives seem so autonomous and so unfathomed. And as in the Book of Jonah, the same is true for plants and animals: when, during the hunting scene, a wolf emerges from the woods and Tolstoy describes how he shudders "at the sight of human eyes, which he had probably never seen before," the entire existence of the animal flashes into view for a second. At times human life recedes into its cherished minor place in the background, and Tolstoy lets us glimpse all of nature, its animated whole.

The artistic recreation of life was among the means by which Tolstoy sought to identify the meaning of his own existence, creating in *War and Peace* a kind of laboratory for examining its elements and the forces acting on it. Like Pierre Bezukhov, the writer was always being consumed by a new passion, to which he intended to devote himself fully: he would become a diplomat with a degree in Oriental languages; he would marry a Cossack girl and live in an *aoul* like Olenin in *The Cossacks*; he would race horses with the Bashkirs in Samara; he would write works rivaling Homer and Shakespeare; he would be the patriarch of a great family; he would become a holy sage and teach the world the meaning of the Gospels; he would become a pilgrim and walk the earth in search of the Truth. In each of these soul-scenarios, Tolstoy saw a vision of another life, a life in which his own could be consummated and made sensible.

After completing *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy experienced a religious crisis. Disillusioned with art and literature, he devoted himself to his study of the Gospels, out of which grew his once-notorious teachings of nonviolence and a churchless Christianity. At one point he intended to become a cobbler, taking private lessons from one of his tradesmen and making thick boots for his friends. (On receiving his pair, Tolstoy's friend Sukhotin put them on his bookshelf after the twelfth volume of Tolstoy's collected works, with a label that read "Volume XIII.") The vexation of his later work lies in part in Tolstoy's decision to trade complexity for simplicity and universal usefulness—in the feeling that he is attempting *not* to address the truth as he sees it, that he is somehow deliberately misplacing his powers. It is as though, regarding the question of what he actually believed, Tolstoy, in Isaiah Berlin's phrase, "did his best to falsify the answer," and to convince the world of the strength of his faith just as it wavered more and more wildly. It worked: the popular image of Tolstoy is the one that appears in the famous photograph in which he stands next to Gorky at Yasnaya Polyana. Dressed in a heavy, rough peasant shirt tied with a thick leather belt, he stares at the camera, weary and wise, even holy, his streaming biblical beard so white that he seems to be dissolving into the snow-covered Russian landscape.

When Tolstoy was in the Caucasus as a young man, he heard the story of Hadji Murat, a famously brave and violent Avar warrior from Dagestan who decamped to the Russians in opposition to the Muslim cleric Shamil, and then betrayed the Russians, and died fighting against troops of both sides. Very late in life, having disavowed his previously literary works and become himself a destination for spiritual pilgrims, Tolstoy wrote his own account of Hadji Murat's story. At first glance, the story seems to take its cue from Homer, and Hadji Murat comes off as a latter-day Greek hero dying honorably on the field of battle. But there is more to it. The story is also a reflection on switching paths in search of the right one. In a strange way Hadji Murat is a kindred spirit of Pierre Bezukhov, both of them drawn now to one solution, now to another, examining by means of experience all the possibilities, especially the antithetical ones, zigzagging in the hope of discovering the correct choice.

When, in Tolstoy's story, a Russian general speaking at a military banquet about Hadji Murat says, in English, "All's well that ends well," the phrase has taken on a tragic irony absent from its early use as the working title for *War and Peace*. Hadji Murat dies a warrior's death, but he also fails in his attempt to rescue his family, pinned by the two opposing sides that he has equally betrayed. The story could be taken as an illustration of the impossibility of things "ending well," or even ending at all in the sense of reaching completion. For Tolstoy, what meaning there is lies in the attempt, not in the arrival. The lives of Pierre Bezukhov and Hadji Murat are exemplary for the ceaselessness of their flawed conversions and impassioned recalculations, all of them undertaken at the edge of what may be an abyss.

In 1910 Tolstoy fled Yasnaya Polyana in spiritual despair, and died of pneumonia in transit, at the train station of a provincial town. In his last few days, he began dictating a letter to his English biographer and translator Aylmer Maude, but finished only the first half-sentence: "On my way to the place where I wished to be alone I was…" The tragic irony that sounds over Pierre and Hadji Murat finally sounded over Tolstoy himself. Following the promptings of his soul toward an answer for the question that filled his world, he left thousands of pages in which we may recognize our own world, various, blossoming, and inconclusive. ◆

White-Out

New disasters join us
to the old chaos. The hardware
of pain. The torturer's chain.
Flashlight, the dog.
There are no cloisters left
to pray for us. Astrologers
help out the little they can.
By their customary
indirection: Luna is with Antares.
A violent fixed star, next to
the malefics. Mars is in Aries
in his eighth house. And his
Midheaven progresses to
the grill's sizzle. Testicular
electrodes. The sun is a merciless
engine, rubbing its hands.

ROBERT BENSE

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Washington Diarist

Lizzie

It is like the tulip craze, this primary season, except that nobody knows which ones are the tulips. The Clinton panic, his even more than hers, the cracking of their feeling of entitlement to power, is delightful to witness (if she loses the nomination or the election, she will not have lost, she will have been *denied*); and the Obama question—isn't he lovely?—has an increasing number of people wondering whether loveliness, and a loamy reiteration of the enduring American fantasy about the transcendence of politics, is a sufficient qualification to rule. Meanwhile an unprecedented number of Americans are typing and hyping their opinions about the contest: the barricades are down, the punditocracy is dead, the technology has killed it, the people are their own commentators. So the temptation to add one's own incandescence to the din is easy to resist. Anyway, I have something better—more primary, if you will—to write about. Another wristwatch has been taken from another wrist.

I adapt those words from Robert Lowell, because the wrist this time was Elizabeth Hardwick's—his wife, but enough of that, she was abundantly more. The obituary in *The New York Times* reported her remark that "everything I know I learned from him," but I do not believe her. Lizzie's temperament, her angle of perception, her lordship of language: these could not have been acquired, even from Lowell, even by love. The story of her accomplishment should not be made to fit into the story of her marriage, not least because it obscures her blazing untheorized womanliness. Not since Jean Rhys has the experience of existing as a woman been so truthfully and so freshly rendered in English prose, or so it seems to this thankful man. Lizzie's great subject was not the eternal feminine, it was the temporal feminine; and to call this feminism, though she was certainly a feminist, is to dull it, to pummel art into a mere position. The force of her accounts of the womanly life (about which there was nothing ladylike) was owed finally to the fact, plain to all who knew her, that there was something even more essential than Lizzie's sex, and it was her individuation. Nobody spoke or wrote like Lizzie—no other woman, no other man.

She was a paradoxical creature: Southern curves, Northern lines. When she went from Kentucky to New York, "the holy city," in 1939, she did not subtract, she added; and so her mind became an enchanting union of delicacy and asperity. In her criticism, Lizzie knew how to be devastating without being militant. She had all the brains of the *Partisan Review* crew but none of the sacerdotal sureness. She never needed to think of herself as the smartest person she knew. Instead there was a spinning intelligence wickedly applied. Lizzie's wickedness was rightly legendary. ("History assaults you and if you live you are restored to the world of gossip.") She could be even more virulently funny about people she loved than about people she hated, which consoled me when I would wonder about the jokes she made when I left the room. Sometimes the wildness of her observations about our mutual friends shocked me, though she was always pointing to something that was really there, and the playfulness almost always kept pace with the malice. The epicene pleasures of her conversation, especially when we were drinking, were for me one of the keys to the city. (And of her letters, too: "Dear Cottonhead," she would begin.) She made you feel like the other member of a conspiracy of two.

And yet she was not only, or mainly, wicked; and she was not another slave to metropolitan wit. Lizzie was an inexhaustibly magnanimous woman: "*Public assistance*, beautiful phrase." She had a skill for lightening your load without lying to you about it. She was the most masterful of readers: she read people as strenuously as she read books, and in *Sleepless Nights*, one of the most beautiful blues ever sung in Manhattan, what Lizzie read was life. She never left a book as she found it; I will always remember the rainy evening in which she unmade and then remade *Middlemarch* for me. She possessed the "greed for particulars" that she admired in the women poets of her time. ("It is Saturday and people with debts are going to restaurants.") As for her intimacy with the language, it really does remind you of the sorcery of Lowell, this certainty that a particular word is being used in a particular way for the very first time. Lizzie was one of those writers whom other writers read enviously. I used to worry that the glittering example of her style, the voluptuousness that she knew how to confer upon her every apprehension, was partly responsible for the rampant preciosity, the cult of the sentence, in the American writing of her day—for that cursory *New Yorker*ish pseudo-aestheticism that responds to, say, *The Fire Next Time*, or even to *The Birth of Tragedy*, by declaring it to be a fine piece of writing; but there were other culprits, too. Like those painters who make you forget the difference between abstraction and representation, Lizzie made you forget the difference between poetry and prose.

One afternoon Lizzie made me forget something else. We were in her apartment, in the atrium of her sensibility, and she was leafing through an album of photographs. I noticed an old picture of her, black and white, standing in a doorway in perfect vitality, a flowing skirt and a tight sweater, a cigarette in her hand and an exalting look of self-possession in her eyes. I will say only that I was immediately reminded of a certain cheesy Christopher Reeve movie that had played in the theaters not long before. The sting of belatedness was sugar-sweet, and I count it now among what she once called "the antiquarian interests of middle age." Lizzie knew nothing of it, of course. She kept merrily turning, and interpreting, the pages. The double-tied knot of memory and desire: it was her own theme, after all.

Leon Wieseltier

ANTHONY RUSSO

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